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ABSTRACT

The first of six issues of the GED Items Newsletter publishied in 1988 contains articles on General Educational Development (GED) mathematics instruction, suggestions for teaching writing, and public relations and marketing. Issue 2 has articles on GED science instruction, GED for Marines, holistic scoring, and a review of the new GED tests. Articles in issue 3 address GED credibility and acceptability, GED social studies instruction, GED writing instruction, teaching adults, GED and industry, and the GED advisory committee. The articles in issue 4/5 focus on GED and learning disabled students, testing the physically handicapped, GED test 4 (interpreting literature and the arts) teaching tips, and the GED essay. Issue 6 contains articles on a follow-up of GED completers, GED writing instruction and teaching tips, GED and the military, and GED success stories. (YLB)

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GED Items

Vol. 5, Nos. 1-6

The Newsletter of the GED Testing Service

American Council on Education

Washington, DC

1988

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AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

VOL. 5, NO. 1 January/February 1988 • The Newsletter of the GED Testing Service • Washington, D.C.

It's 1988!

by Douglas R. Whitney, Director of the GED Testing Service

On Saturday, January 2, adult examinees in Alabama, Arkansas, the District of Columbia, Florida, Maine, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Wisconsin, and two U.S. territories became the first persons to take the revised GED Tests. (On that date, the revised GED Tests were introduced in these states and territories.) Almost 64 months have passed since GEDTS announced that a review of the tests was to begin. The end results of those months are now in use!

While most of our readers are aware of changes in the GED Tests, some may not know that these are the first major revisions in the tests since 1978. Changes in the GED Tests are not undertaken lightly; this decade, the changes involved the assistance of thousands of adult educators and students. Some of the key milestones in this process were:

- During 1983 more than a thousand educators participated in a series of surveys concerning the goals of the GED program and the contents of the tests.
- From February through June 1984, a 26-member Test Specifications Committee outlined the changes that it felt should be made in the tests.
- During 1983 and 1985, more than 6,000 high school seniors wrote essays as part of the research for the new Writing Skills Test. In 1985, nearly 2,000 GED examinees in Iowa, Maryland, New Jersey, and District of Columbia wrote essays as part of the feasibility study.

(continued on page 3)

GED Math Instruction

by Myrna Manly

(Myrna Manly left the GED Testing Service for Sunny California, but she has passed on a second installment on GED Math instruction.)

The GED math instruction article in the November/December 1987 *Items* recommended that calculator use be integrated into GED mathematics instruction. Implicit in this recommendation is the mandate to use calculators properly and intelligently. The ability to *bestimate* is the key ingredient that separates an intelligent calculator user from a mindless button pusher. We must, therefore, focus on developing estimation skills in our mathematics instruction.

Prerequisite: single-digit mathematics facts. Students must be able to quickly recall basic mathematics facts before they can estimate. In fact, whenever confronted with a single-digit operation one should do this mentally rather than with a calculator. Expand these single digit

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and more

GED Success Story

GED Graduate Awarded Harvard Fellowship

Harvard has many Ph.D. candidates. But when Stephen James, who graduated summa cum laude from New York's Lehman College, began his six-year fellowship at Harvard last fall, he did not fit the traditional mold.

James, 34, is a Bronx bus driver, father of four, and a high school dropout. His eight years of undergraduate study at Lehman were interrupted repeatedly by the need for full-time employment. Aspiring to a career in college teaching and writing, he plans to study 20th-century English and American literature at Harvard.

Originally, James applied to only one graduate school—not Harvard—rather than pay multiple application fees. Harvard invited him to apply, however, waived its fee, and subsequently awarded him the fellowship, which includes tuition and living expenses.

Before attracting Harvard's attention, James achieved distinction as the only junior among 15 Lehman students elected to Phi Beta Kappa last year. An honors student, he participated in the college's individualized Lehman Scholars Program, and made Dean's List with a perfect 4.0 grade point average. Last year he received a Lehman Foundation Scholarship, which allowed him to cut back his bus-driving schedule to six hours a day.

Born in the South Bronx, Stephen James received a GED diploma and took a variety of bluecollar jobs before becoming a carpenter. In the mid-1970s when construction work declined and layoffs were frequent, James became a bus driver for the New York Bus Service for a steadier paycheck. He also wanted more flexible hours, as he had decided to enroll in Lehman's Adult Degree Program.

He started slowly, studying part time and dropping out several times for financial reasons before returning in 1982. "My decision to return to school was not at all vocational. I just wanted to learn more," said James. "I never suspected I would ever receive a fellowship to Harvard."

Excerpted from Facets, City University of New York, October 1987.

Math

(continued from page 1)

operations by showing the patterns that occur when dealing with powers of 10. For example, finding the difference of $600 - 200$ is no more difficult than $6 - 2$. Use similar examples such as $6 \times 7 = 42$, $60 \times 7 = 420$, $60 \times 70 = 4200$, and $56/8 = 7$, $560/8 = 70$, and $5600/80 = 70$ to reveal that single-digit mental mathematics can be a very powerful tool.

Estimate, then calculate. Make estimation an integral part of every computation by determining the range of the answer before you begin the operation. "Where would the value of this answer fall? Would it be less than 1? Greater than 10? Less than 100?" are questions to ask *before* actually calculating the answer. To achieve more accurate estimations, use a rounding technique that requires both the single-digit skill mentioned above as well as a sense of the range of the answer.

Round with a purpose. Rounding with a purpose in mind requires adjusting the numbers involved to be compatible enough so that you can do the operation mentally. The value you choose to round to is determined by the other number in the problem. For example, if 238 were to be divided by 59, it would be appropriate to estimate it as $240 / 60 = 4$. Whereas if that same number 238 were to be divided by 51, one might do better using an estimate of $250 / 50 = 5$. This rounding technique differs from the traditional method in that there is not one specific correct way to proceed; any way that works is acceptable. Fractions and decimals will also be rounded to familiar quantities for estimating. Consider adding these numbers: 13/15 and 5/9. The fraction 13/15 is close to 1 and 5/9 is close to 1/2. One can therefore estimate the sum as being close to 1 1/2. Common fraction and decimal equivalents are also helpful to know when performing mental math. For example, if asked to find 18% of 147, being able to recognize that 18% is approximately 1/5 and using 150 rather than 147 makes this simply $1/5 \times 150 = 30$.

Test for reasonableness. Look at the answer in the context of the problem. Ask if it is reasonable. "Is 4 feet a reasonable height for a building? Would we expect a person to be 500 inches tall?" are questions that can be answered with common sense. Encourage students to use their innate common sense to acquire a number sense.

Practice, practice, practice. It is obvious that students need to build confidence in their number sense before they can be comfortable estimating. Practice is the means to that end. Take every chance to develop this confidence deliberately by using repeated examples structured to show patterns. Analyze answers for their logical connection to the problem.

Upon reflection, we realize that estimating and common sense, combined with basic mathematical knowledge, are the critical elements needed for mathematical literacy in today's world of calculating machines. But is it true that these will be enough to pass the GED Test when calculators are not allowed? Yes, as long as the examinee also is aware of some mathematical applications and concepts. Item #14 in Practice Test BB is a good illustration to support this answer. The item has a sketch of a triangle in which two of the angles are labelled 37 and 67. The question asks, "How many degrees does the third angle measure?" and gives these alternatives:

(1) 28
(2) 34
(3) 76
(4) 256
(5) Not enough information is given.

Examinees who are familiar with this concept know that the sum of the angles in a triangle is 180 and know that they must add the two values and then subtract their sum from 180. The examinee who is an estimator would round the values to 40 and 70, add them to get 110, subtract this sum from 180 to get 70, and choose #3 as the only possible correct answer—all without paper and pencil computation.

Items that can be solved like this, combined with the "set-up" items that do not require any calculation, make up 75% of the items on the published practice tests. This seems to be a sure indication that time spent learning to estimate will be doubly valuable—both as preparation for the GED Mathematics Test and for the *big test* itself: Real Life.

Our series of Teaching Tips by the GED Editors will continue in the March issue with a column by Richard Metcalf, the Science Editor.

It's 1988!

(continued from page 1)

- In 1985 and 1986, nearly 3,000 GED Examiners and more than 100,000 examinees participated in field testing of questions used on the 1988 GED Tests and Official Practice Tests. Each examinee completed at least 30 minutes of additional testing so GEDTS could be certain that the newly-written items were appropriate for adults.
- In 1986 and 1987, more than 40,000 high school seniors completed one or more of the new tests as a part of the studies that established the new standard scores and percentiles for the GED Tests and Practice Tests.

New audiocassette, Braille, and large print tests were also created, with each requiring a unique set of questions and formats. And, of course, new Spanish Tests were completed, these are also unique tests rather than simple translations of the English-language tests. Canadian English-language tests were developed as well, although they will not be introduced until later in 1988.

In addition, the GEDTS staff and consultants have completely rewritten all program publications (including the Teacher's Guide and Official GED Practice Tests) and have updated brochures, forms, and catalogs to reflect the new tests and new title for Test Four. All of these changes were, of course, in addition to those associated with each year's new crop of tests.

Finally, because each testing center needed to receive its new tests and associated materials well in advance of the changeover date, GEDTS staff have advanced the contracting and shipping dates for all test materials. The goal, of course, was to have all the needed test materials in the hands of the local Examiners comfortably ahead of the scheduled switch.

It wasn't just GEDTS staff, of course, who were busy. Nearly every publisher of adult education instructional materials prepared new books. Video tapes and books for teacher training were, for the first time, also published by some companies.

Have we always kept on schedule? Well, not quite. Although the English-language tests were out in time, the Spanish Tests will not be available for use until shortly after January 1. Similarly, the large print, Braille, and audiocassette tests will also be delayed by a few weeks. Even as we write, a few last supplies (e.g. additional answer sheet formats) are still under development.

On the whole, though, the process and timetable outlined in 1982 was met. It's January 1988 and the new tests are in the field. The tests represent a significant improvement in the assessment portion of the GED program. We all should be proud of the open, direct, and enthusiastic manner in which we have prepared for this event. Thanks and congratulations!

Coal Company Invests in Future

Martin County Coal Corporation of Inez, Kentucky, offers its employees and their families a chance to better their education and earn a GED diploma through the KET/GED Series.

The company purchased a complete set of the videotape lessons produced by KET, which they show at an on-site training center twice a week. All expenses for workbooks and exams are paid by Martin County Coal.

Corporation volunteers, including President Raymond Bradbury, provide tutoring to guide participants through the lessons. The incentives— including a $300 program completion bonus— apply to all enrollees, including employee spouses and children.

"We felt a sense of loyalty to the employees and their families, and we wanted to put something back in the community that can last for years to come," said J. Mack Preece, personnel manager of Martin County Coal Corporation.

"Our commitment to the GED program says we're not interested in just an immediate fix, but rather a long-term investment in the future of Inez, and of our employees and their families. Martin County Coal Corporation has been committed for some time to improving our community through various efforts. There's no better way to do that than through education," stressed Preece.

Ruben Bowen is one of 32 people enrolled in the KET/GED Series through Martin County Coal. More than 25 years ago, Bowen left school, but he decided to earn his GED diploma when Martin County Coal presented the opportunity.

Joint Effort to Expand Services to Adults With Disabilities

A memorandum, issued September 8, 1987, signed by Justin W. Dart Jr., Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) and Karl O. Haigler, Director of the Division of Adult Education (DAE), announced a joint initiative will seek better coordination between RSA, DAE, the State vocational rehabilitation agencies, and the State Departments of Education.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 authorized grants to State vocational rehabilitation agencies for statewide programs to assist disabled individuals to prepare for gainful employment; to support employment services for severely disabled individuals; and to provide programs of independent living services for severely disabled individuals.

State agencies are encouraged to: develop and implement inter-agency-agreements that will assist adults with disabilities to more effectively meet their vocational aspirations; ensure that adults with disabilities receive all appropriate services for which they are eligible; and encourage State and local agencies to give priority to identifying disabled individuals requiring services and assuring prompt and effective service. (These can include the opportunity to take the GED Tests.)

For further information, contact: William R. Langer, U.S. Department of Education, Division of Adult Education, Room 522, Reporters Building, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202, (202) 732-2270.

Technical Help for Adult Education

Consultation on uses of technology in adult literacy programs is now available through the Adult Literacy Technology Project. Ten regional technology consultants can provide assistance and referral services. For more information, contact Avis Meenan, Project Coordinator, Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Pennsylvania State University, College of Education, 203 Rackley Building, University Park, PA 16802; (814) 863-3777.

Happy New Year!

Teaching Writing: A Page of Suggestions from the Field

GED Writing Sample

Working with a special project in New York State to prepare writing instructors for the GED Writing Sample, Dorothy Hammond has made many suggestions for guiding the progress of students. One such suggestion is to recognize a variety of formats for writing since, for many, writing in some formats may be easier (or closer to an instructional starting point for students) than in others.

Personal Narrative takes advantage of customary speech patterns. Informal journal writing may be a way to involve students with this.

Personal Expression is similar but would include feelings related to the narrative.

The Process Essay explains how to do something. The writer may be asked to summarize the steps necessary to solve a math or science problem or to put together a recipe.

The Story Starter gives the writer a lead into a sentence or paragraph, such as "On my way to school today...."

Working with Description can follow nicely on the story starter and students' earlier writing will provide material to develop and embellish.

Expository Writing is the level of writing required to respond to the topic given on the GED Writing Sample. Some students may have difficulty becoming comfortable with this format unless they have practiced successfully with some of the others.

A teacher may want to choose from this variety of formats when asking for a writing sample from a new student since expository writing is at the *upper* end.

One final hint is to have students • keep **folders** of their writings. With a set of instructions from the teacher, students can go back and revise papers they may have worked on several times before.

Writing Ideas

by Marta Hebert, Omaha, Nebraska

Most of us as teachers work with adults individually or in groups that are outside of the realm of the traditional "High School Student." Each student then comes to the learning process as a unique individual with a specific background of experience and current life-style. A recognition of that fact and employment of it can be used as a basis to foster able skilled writers. Start out by reviewing skills from the very basic concepts, always giving specific examples.

For example, expand a basic sentence such as: "**Bears eat**" to "**Big brown bears and young deer eat red berries slowly in the woods.**" Identify how each word relates to expand from the original sentence.

Next, armed with a familiarity of how sentences are formed, try the three step plan.

First, have the student write a short sentence in the form: subject, verb, object ("Somebody does something").

Next have them write three sentences about their first sentence.

Then have the students write five sentences about each of the three words from their first sentence explaining more about the original thought.

Another technique is to provide a simple dictation of less than thirty words. Have the student rewrite the example by changing the names, the problem, the solution, and the title.

If time permits, give the students an opportunity to consider "Who they are." Use that thought to explain some aspect of their personality.

No matter the method, however, the focus should be on encouraging students to organize their thoughts and write them effectively.

From NEWS, a newsletter for ABE teachers in Nebraska, October 1987

Writing: What Works?

A recent study of the writing abilities of the U. S. elementary and secondary students found that 86% of the 6th, 8th, 10th, and college-bound 12th graders wrote papers judged to be "competent" or better. This result is in sharp contrast to a 1984 study by the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) which concluded that most students "are unable to write adequately, except in response to the simplest of tasks." The current study, by the UCLA Center for the Study of Evaluation, involved samples from somewhat different student populations than did the NAEP study.

In addition to the writing results, the UCLA study identified three teaching practices that correlated with student performance. These, we judge, would be likely to hold for ABE and GED classes as well. These practices are:

- Teachers who emphasize reading, as well as writing, are apt to produce students who demonstrate better writing abilities.
- Teachers who stress essay planning and group work tend to produce students who perform well on the writing assessment.
- A greater emphasis on spelling and grammar, in contrast with writing, appears to lower student scores.

Writing and the Daily News

We particularly liked this writing suggestion that teachers can use in the classroom. Instructional materials? The local newspaper.

- Change ads into paragraphs.
- Change a graphic into a paragraph.
- Rewrite the weather forecast from a map graphic to paragraph form.
- Using a list of personal ads, choose one and write a paragraph describing the person in the ad.

From The News, *Newtonville, MA 02160.*

Important Reminder:

To keep subscription costs to a minimum, we do not send reminders when individual subscriptions expire. To avoid missing an issue, please keep track of your individual subscriptions and send $6.00 to Judy Allen, Circulation and Production Manager at GEDTS, at the end of your subscription year. Bulk subscribers *only* will receive letters of reminder.

Research at the GED Testing Service

With the addition this September of a new staff member, Janet Baldwin, the GED Testing Service has begun to develop a research network of individuals, agencies, and organizations involved in conducting research on populations served by the GED Tests. Through this network, the GEDTS hopes to identify research topics of concern to the adult basic education community. Janet is compiling a researcher mailing list of individuals involved in studies relating to:

- the impact of adult education/GED preparation programs on adult learners,
- the development of theoretical bases for adult basic learning, and
- the use and impact of the GED Tests.

Janet welcomes suggestions from the *Items* readers regarding topics for the GEDTS research agenda. What studies do *you* think are needed?

In addition to working with research staff and outside groups involved in research on adult learners, Janet will continue the work begun by Drew Malizio to provide assistance to state and local agencies conducting demographic, attitudinal, and followup studies of their GED/ABE populations.

To suggest research topics for the GEDTS research agenda, please write to Janet Baldwin, Senior Research Associate, GED Testing Service, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20036-1163.

GED Advisory Committee

This year's National GED Advisory Committee assembled for a photo at the end of their August meeting. In the first row, from left to right, the members are Roger Goldberg, representing Military Educators; Allan Quigley, Canadian Administrators; Mary Vanis, local ABE directors; Jacqueline Cook, Literacy Agencies; Monika Sullivan, GED graduates; Sue Jones, Business and Industry. Second row: Michael Grubiak, GED Examiners; Wayne Pate, Spanish Language Programs; Bobby Dees, GED Administrators; and Alex Hyman, GED Administrators.

Not in picture: John Christopher, State Directors of Adult Education; William Langner, Special Populations; John Pucciano, U.S. Department of Education; Santee Ruffin, Secondary School Principals; and Richard Zaiden, Trade and Technical Schools.

Our thanks to these members whose term just ended: Allan Quigley, who served for 2 years; Mary Vanis and Bobby Dees, 3 years; and a special thanks to William Langner who served for the 6 years since this committee was first formed.

VISTA/Action Agency:

Public Relations and Marketing Advice

Marketing your program effectively is a must for public relations with the community. In fact, your program can be presented as professionally in Monument, Kansas, as in Chicago, if professional practices are followed. ACTION's Public Relations Department suggests the following items and details for a Professional Press Kit:

- Fact sheet on your organization
- Biographical data (on featured speakers, promoters, or interviewees)
- Three doublespaced press releases on items to be covered by media using these guidelines:
  10 second spot (25 words or less)
  20 second spot (45 words or less)
  60 second spot (120 words, less if dialogue or jingle included)
- The most recent copy of your organization newsletter
- Copies of articles for newspaper, professional newsletters, etc. recognizing your organization.

Give your public relations packet an attractive, individualized look.

Present packet to the correct media person one week prior to the time the event is to be covered or aired. Leave names and work numbers of persons who can be reached for questions.

For more information and/or examples of press releases and public service announcements (PSA's), contact a VISTA Information Specialist or ask your local media to provide examples of 10, 20, & 60 second PSA's.

Adapted from *Literacy Limelights*, A Publication of the Kansas State Library, September, 1987.

Changes in State Schedules

Maryland and Florida will begin to administer the revised GED Tests on **February 1st** instead of January 1st, as originally scheduled.

News and Notes

The Province of New Brunswick has reached a milestone with the GED Testing Program (English). A twenty-six year old Saint John man, William F. Quinlan, wrote the GED Tests in April becoming the 10,000th person to earn a GED diploma. Mr. Quinlan attended a twelve-week GED course prior to writing the tests. His reason for writing was to qualify for entrance to the Stationary Engineering Program offered at the New Brunswick Community College in Saint John. He has been accepted for that course and is presently enrolled in the program.

A reception and dinner were arranged both to present Mr. Quinlan with his certificate and to honor New Brunswick's 1986 National Award Winner, Gerald Joseph Goguen.

Mr. Goguen was thirty-one years old when he took the GED Tests in October, 1986. He obtained a total standard score of 372 out of a possible 393.

In Hartford, Connecticut, Victoria Markey, who received her GED diploma 75 years after dropping out, said it was something she had been meaning to do for a long time.

"I wanted to go back all the time, but there was always something that turned up and I couldn't go," she said. But after receiving a flyer in the mail, "I said, 'Lady, this is your chance. Take it.'"

Gov. William A. O'Neill gave Mrs. Markey, 89, of Norwich, her diploma in a ceremony in his office this past year.

This GED graduate is believed to be the oldest Connecticut resident to complete the General Education Development program. Her achievement drew attention when the program's computer rejected her application because it was not programmed to accept dates of birth from the 1800s!

In West Virgina, Marshall University will receive funds for two programs—ABE teacher training staff development and GED on TV. The ABE program will receive $85,860 to provide inservice and staff development activities to adult basic education teachers in West Virginia. The GED on TV project will receive $100,000 to assess at least 2,000 individuals via a structured telephone interview and by using the results of the Test of Adult Basic Education. Depending upon the results of the assessment, an individual could be referred directly to an ABE class or could be enrolled in the GED on TV program. Twenty sets of GED tapes and twenty VCR's will be purchased for learning centers and libraries throughout the state so that students will be able to check out a tape for a specified period of time to utilize at home.

From West Virginia Literacy. *September 1987.*

GED *Items* is published bi-monthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. This newsletter is not copyrighted and readers are invited to copy any part of the newsletter that has not been previously copyrighted. Credit should be given in accordance with accepted publishing standards. *Editor:* Susan Robinson. *Associate Editors:* Richard Metcalf and Douglas Whitney. *Contributing Editors:* Jean Lowe and Wayne Patience. *Contributors:* Linda Russell, Myrna Manly, and Henry Spille. *Production and Circulation Manager:* Judy Allen.

178 GED Success Stories

You may be interested to know that the GED program staff assigned to the Essex County Houses of Corrections in Salem and Lawrence Massachusetts have graduated one hundred and seventy-eight incarcerated men during the program that ended in June, 1987.

Obviously, these men were intent upon making productive use of their time in prison. However, a good deal of credit is due to the special dedication of the institutional teaching staff who work in an extremely difficult and hostile environment. Through individual attention and firm encouragement, the staff has completed 178 success stories. Hard work deserves recognition. The teaching staff includes: **Sister William** and **Peg Fallon** of the Lawrence Adult Action Center, **Byrdiva Sexton, Beverly Thibault, Helen Riley** of North Shore Community College and **Jean Avery**, Bureau of Institutional Schools.

A special guest speaker at the Salem institution GED graduation was **Ms. Marie Bolter**, a national leader in the rehabilitation of institutionalized individuals and real life star of the television drama "Nobody's Child".

GED: New Special Interest Group Established by OAACE

At the June 19, 1987 Ohio Association for Adults and Continuing Education Board of Directors meeting, members voted to add GED as a special interest group.

President James V. Bina reported that over twenty GED Examiners asked to be considered as the sixth special interest group. GED will be added to Basic Education and Literacy, Business and Industry, Community Agencies, Higher Education, and Vocational and Technical Education. The GED interest area will allow examiners and teachers to identify with OAACE.

According to Richard E. Armanini, Membership Chairman, "Many GED teachers do not realize that OAACE is the oldest professional association in Ohio with a commitment to improve adult education. We need help in identifying GED prep teachers who are not familiar with our organization. Many of the teachers can be found in churches, agency programs, and proprietary school programs that are not funded by the Ohio Department of Education. The OAACE is the only organization to provide these teachers with current adult education information through the newsletter and the state conference."

Illiteracy by Any Other Name

Complicating the job of pinning down what is meant by literacy are the terms bandied about to describe those with inadequate literacy skills. Currently, one may hear "functional" literate or illiterate, "marginal" literate or even "borderline" literate. Harvard University reading researcher Jeanne Chall tried to make sense of the terms by dividing adults seeking literacy into three major groups:

The "**totally illiterate,**" or those whose skills are below the 4th grade level and cannot acquire information through print.

The "**functionally illiterate**" who can read between the fourth and eighth grade level or at the minimum level needed to survive.

The "**new illiterates**" or "marginal" literates, who can function but lack the 12th grade equivalence needed in a complex and technological society.

From The Literacy Beat. *September 1987.*

The 1988 GED Tests—and the Team Who Put Them Together

by Henry Spille, Director of the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials, The American Council on Education

During the past five years, thousands of persons have contributed to the GED Testing Service's test development activities. First, the Specification Committee created a broad plan for the test content. Next, adult educators reviewed the plan and suggested revisions; this revised plan was then reviewed by the GED Advisory Committee. The Commission on Educational Credit and Credentials further refined the plan and approved it. At this point, the GED editors hired item writers to create questions to implement the plan, and GED examinees and high school seniors tested the items for their appropriateness and quality. Finally, the GEDTS staff implemented the plan by building the items into tests. And while all this "routine" test development work was being done, plans for essay scoring were made, and the training of essay readers was conducted.

This all sounds as if the planning and execution for the revised tests were perfect. They weren't. The GEDTS staff suffered setbacks, such as when key staff members resigned. But new staff members were recruited and quickly molded into the team. The setbacks were overcome, and now we have the 1988 version of the GED Tests.

My accolades of course go to all who contributed to the test development process but especially to the GEDTS staff. In football parlance, they have played every minute of every game for five years without a timeout or a halftime or a week to prepare for the next game. Regularly they achieved "first downs" even after suffering losses and every two minute drill resulted in a score. These people are a team in the true sense of the word—and a real credit to the "head coach"!

It's thus a pleasure to commend the GEDTS staff at the beginning of this important year. In every sense, they have earned "the game ball."

Ask the Experts... That's You!

Using Advisory Committees Effectively

Several ideas about using advisory committees effectively came from Fairfax County, Virginia, where three different advisory committees serve three very different purposes.

- The advisory committee appointed by the school board both advises the adult education program and informs the school board about the needs, problems, and activities in adult education. In Fairfax, as in most areas, *adult* education is not the primary mission of the public schools, so the needs of adult learners could be overlooked without support from this board.
- Second, the Office of Adult and Community Education appoints a community advisory board comprised of business, civic, and church leaders. This board serves primarily to inform the community about the current program as well as to suggest new program directions. This advisory board is also a source of political support. Because the board both informs the public and supports adult education, its membership is changed each year so that the maximum number of people can learn about adult education activities.
- The third type of advisory board is the one that actually provides the most "advice" to their program. It is composed entirely of students enrolled in ABE and GED classes and learning centers. Success in having students actually show up and participate in the meetings (one or two each year) depends on a couple of things. Because Fairfax adult education serves a wide geographical area, students from each class or learning center are selected to come in pairs. This means they know at least one other person at the meetings and that they have a ride. Prior to the committee meeting, each teacher organizes a class discussion of issues that concern all students. The students, as representatives from the class, feel a responsibility for attending meetings and participating in discussions which they take very seriously. This committee has made many valuable suggestions.

Our thanks to Fairfax County educators for sharing their experience.

Next month's question: How do you select instructional materials? Please send your ideas to Jean Lowe at GEDTS. We try to publish all responses!

Reminder:

National Adult and Continuing Education Week is March 20–26, 1988.

Resources for Disabled Adults

The Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, a branch of the Free Library of Philadelphia, has GED preparatory materials available on audiotape, in Braille, and Large print. The materials are for use by students with disabilities enrolled in ABE/GED courses offered through the library. This program is in its second year and operates with funds provided by the state of Pennsylvania.

Last year, eight people who enrolled in the library's program obtained their GED. This year, there are eight students in the basic skills program and ten in the GED program. Alysia Zee, instructor at the library, says students in the program are print handicapped, with various disabilities. She feels they could be successful in "regular" educational programs, but teachers sometimes have trouble integrating disabled students into their classes.

The library also has an excellent, **free** handbook for instructors of students with disabilities. The handbook not only describes the disabilities that may affect our adult learners, but it offers really useful suggestions for instructing these students. In fact, teachers of *any* adult learner could benefit from this material. For information on the library's GED preparatory materials or to obtain a free handbook, write Alysia Zee, The Library for the Blind & Physically Handicapped, 919 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107.

The Staff at GEDTS

Like a family album, these photos catch our staff at a variety of activities. In the top row, from left to right: Elaine Chamberlain, Manager Military & Corrections Testing; Debbie Edmonds, Program Assistant; Joyce Downey, Social Studies Editor; Richard Metcalf, Science Editor; Michael Trueheart, Shipping Room. Middle row, from left to right: Jean Lowe, Assistant Director of GED; Kathy Pope, Administrative Assistant; Judy Allen, Staff Assistant; Maria Spriggs, Scanner Operator; Gregory Shannon, Senior Research Associate; Susan Robinson, Editor of GED *Items*; Linda Russell, Administrative Assistant to the Director of GED; Janet Baldwin, Senior Research Associate; Cheryl Roberts, Receptionist; Douglas Whitney, Director of GED. Bottom row, from left to right: Rudy Mason, Supervisor of Shipping Room; Hank Spille, Director of the Center for Adult Learning and Educational Credentials; Karen Ciomaney, Math Editor; Dave Messersmith, Research Analyst; Bea Wallace, Administrative Assistant to Hank Spille; Joan Auchter, Writing Specialist; Patricia Jones, Data Resources Coordinator; Debra Lonallen, Administrative Assistant; Kate Nicmi, Administrative Assistant; Cora Thomas, Scanner Operator; and David Johnston, Shipping room. Not in pictures: Seung Gee, Bookkeeper; Nancy Benton, Staff Assistant; Wayne Patience, Associate Director of GED; and Alice Marable, Senior Systems Analyst.

Vol. 5, No. 1
January/February, 1988

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AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION

VOL. 5, NO. 2 March/April 1988 • The Newsletter of the GED Testing Service • Washington, D.C.

Dollar General's GED Campaign:
A Stunning Success

Dollar General President and Chief Executive Officer Cal Turner, Jr. congratulates recent GED recipient Deborah Huff. Deborah, a clerk at Dollar General Store #2 in Carthage, Tennessee, took advantage of the company's ongoing GED/Literacy program.

Perhaps you have already heard the radio spots. They ran in 1300 markets in 23 states beginning in September 1987. And they're still running in many states.

"The man who started Dollar General...only had a third grade education."

"That's why his family is making all 1300 Dollar General stores an information center for anyone...who'd like to get information about taking their GED."

"...your Dollar General store has the information you need right there at the cash register."

"If you're out there making it every day, our bet is, you're a better student than you think."

"...someone will contact you with the information you need confidentially by mail."

These ads represent a unique program that was the generous contribution of the Dollar General Corporation. Based in Scottsville, Kentucky, Dollar General's Turner family donated the planning, production, and over $500,000 of paid air time. And because of the concept and its sensitive presentation, radio stations across the nation donated more than $200,000 of additional station air time.

So far, the response to this program has been incredible. Over 5400 people have already gone into the stores, asked for the brochure, and mailed the request for information to the Kentucky headquarters. Requests are then forwarded to the appropriate state adult education office, and letters follow to the individual. Presently, there are more than 250,000 brochures in circulation and inquiries are still coming in at the rate of 75-150 per week.

Dollar General is also tracking every person who mailed in a coupon and will follow up to see that an appropriate local connection was made.

(continued on page 3)

GED Science Instruction

Science is often given the least attention in GED preparatory classes because many instructors feel they lack sufficient background in the subject. Be assured, however, that the revised GED Science Test does not contain pure recall items, so memorization of word lists or definitions should not be the main concerns for both teachers and students. In fact, there is no official list of GED science topics from which all items must come. On the other hand, the Science Test *does* require the examinee to have some basic science knowledge.

Because the test requires the examinee to demonstrate an understanding of presented information and to a larger extent the ability to use this information in various ways, the instructor should familiarize students with the thinking skills that the test demands.

The following approaches should also help examinees prepare for the revised Science Test.

First, a **group approach** will stimulate discussion and cooperative

(continued on page 2)

Inside *Items*

Delay in GED Scores and Diplomas

New GED Brochures

GED for Marines

Ask the Experts

and more . . .

GED Success Story

New Program Has Foster Grandparents Back In Class

by Sam Atwood

Lester Miller is studying for his high school diploma so his "grandchildren" can get a better education.

Miller, 64, is one of 47 foster grandparents in Santa Fe who help teach and nurture children with special needs in 14 elementary schools.

Most of the foster grandparents—including Miller—never completed high school. But a new pilot program in Santa Fe, NM, is giving them the chance to be students again and earn a General Equivalency Diploma (GED), completing their high school studies.

"The more I learn here, the more I can help kids in the schoolhouse. . . . (my studies) are going to encourage children to keep going to school to learn. They won't be dropouts like most of us," Miller says.

So far, about 10 seniors have signed up for the twice-weekly class at the Alto Street senior citizens center. Seniors work at their own pace with the help of two instructors to learn the basics of math, writing, reading, social studies, and science.

"It's pretty hard 'cause when you get away from it for 40-some years, your brain doesn't function like it did when you were 18 years old," Miller adds.

Miller dropped out of high school during the Depression to find a job in the Civilian Conservation Corps. His father was sick at the time and Miller had to work to survive.

Miller has no children and no family in Santa Fe. But as a foster grandparent, he's taught fourth graders at St. Francis Cathedral School for the past three years. He works closely with three students, and they call him grandpa. "That makes me feel great," Miller says.

The GED program—the first of its kind in the state—started last summer and is quickly gaining momentum. Within two weeks of its inception, over 30 foster grandparents had enrolled in the class, says Dory Garcia, director of the local foster grandparent program. Garcia is already planning a cap-and-gown graduation ceremony in May.

Science *(continued from page 1)*

learning. Usually in a group, members process and learn more because they reinforce learned facts. The group also provides an arena for members to share common experiences and to become more confident about themselves.

Next, it is helpful to introduce **science-related articles** from magazines or newspapers. Begin a **discussion** with questions that will enable the members to demonstrate an understanding of the information, such as asking them to state (or write down) the *main idea* of the article. Avoid using questions that can be answered with yes or no. Ask the group to list the *facts* presented in the article. Then continue with open-ended questions that examine the who, what, where, when, which, why, and how of the material. Slowly direct the questioning toward higher thinking skills by asking questions such as how the information could be used or applied to other situations; what conclusion could be made based on the facts; what are the cause/effect relationships, if any; what information supports the conclusion; and what other types of questions arise from the material presented.

Keep the discussion on target by directing the flow of questioning. However, knowing that there are many ways to solve the same problem, respect the student who can reach the same conclusion by an alternate route of reasoning.

During discussions allow ample time for a student to answer each question. When a student is given more time to think, the answer is more complete in sentence structure and in intellectual complexity. Too often teachers do not wait long enough for a student response and answer their own questions. Or teachers may rephrase the question several ways before the student responds; both approaches merely frustrate the student.

An **article announcing a scientific breakthrough** or describing a scientific study to solve a particular problem can be used to familiarize students with the scientific method. Many publications (see box) have sections that describe science updates. Using such an article, you may wish to do the following:

- Ask the students to describe the problem addressed in the article.
- From the information provided, ask the students if the hypothesis that the study was based on can be stated.
- Describe the method(s) that the scientists used to explore the problem.
- List the results or data that were discovered from the methods used.
- State the conclusion that was reached.
- Discuss if there were sufficient data to substantiate a conclusion.
- List additional questions that could be addressed in a follow-up study.

Be aware that every scientific study needs to be compared to a controlled situation, an experiment should test one variable at a time, and that the test results should be based on a very large number of trials.

Regardless of the approaches you use, however, remember to begin slowly and give the students the support they need to build confidence in their own abilities.

The following list provides sources for science information that can be used in discussion groups.

Television Programs:

Bodywatch, *Discover*, *Mr. Wizard's World*, *Nature*, *Nova*, *Newton's Apple*, *The Making of a Continent*, and *Wild America*

Publications:

American Health (American Health Partners), *Discover* (Time, Inc), *National Geographic* (National Geographic Society), *Nutrition Action* (Center for Science in the Public Interest), *Popular Science* (Times Mirror Magazines, Inc.), *Science Scope* and *The Science Teacher* (National Science Teachers Association), and *Science News* (Science Service, Inc.)

Other Sources:

Museums, Planetariums, Sea Aquariums, Science Fairs, Health Fairs, Botanical Gardens, County Cooperative Extension Services, 4-H Programs, and County and State Fairs

National Adult and Continuing Education Week

March 20-26, 1988
Adult Learners: America's Future

GED For Marines

General Al Gray, commandant of the Marine Corps, recently directed that members of the Marine Corps who do not have a high school or GED diploma be identified, counseled, and provided the means to earn a diploma.

According to the *Navy Times*, Gray specifically mentioned the GED program as one of the ways to accomplish this. Although Gray's directive is aimed at younger Marines, it applies to all the 2,366 active duty personnel who lack diplomas. "This will be a continuing effort," Gray said, "until every Marine, regardless of grade or years in service has, at a minimum, a valid high school credential." The Marines will pay all tuition and testing costs, but the students will have to pay for books and fees themselves.

Earlier in his career, when Gray was commanding general of the 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune (North Carolina), he ordered that arriving Marines be routinely screened. Persons without diplomas were either given the GED Tests immediately or enrolled in classes leading to a GED or high school diploma. Those who did not complete their study at the base took the GED during the standard six-month Mediterranean Marine tours of duty.

"Gray is the best disciple for education we have in the corps," says one of his directors of education. The general is self-educated and does not have a college degree. Reminds us that many of education's strongest supporters are people who received their educations outside the classroom.

Dollar General *(from page 1)*

Because of the Turner family's long-time concern for education, they wanted to do more than just underwrite a publicity campaign. Concluding that many of their stores' customers are in the target population for GED services, the Turners wanted to be actively involved in helping. Certainly, the "grassroots" approach is consistent with the chain's advertising.

Dollar General will continue this effort through 1988—offering the "brochure that can change people's lives." For more information, contact Carol Harris, Vice President of Marketing, Dollar General Corporation, One Burton Hills Boulevard, Nashville, TN 37215.

[This story was prepared with the assistance of Miller Leonard.]

Delay in Issuing GED Credentials

The GED (General Educational Development) Testing Service recently discovered a systematic error in its calculation of standard scores for this year's GED Tests. This has meant that in the first three months of 1988, examinees in 12 states were assigned higher standard scores for their test performance than merited. The error also delayed the reporting of test scores in the District of Columbia and 5 additional states.

The GED Tests, administered to adults who have not graduated from high school, account for nearly 450,000 diplomas a year. Beginning in January 1988, revised GED Tests are being introduced into the United States and participating Canadian provinces. Fortunately, because the introduction has been gradual, most states have not been affected and fewer than 6,400 diplomas have been issued. It is estimated that, had not the errors occurred, about 90% of these diplomas would have been granted in any case. That is, only about 640 diplomas were issued to persons whose scores did not warrant them.

Since March 6, when the errors were discovered, affected states have issued no credentials and no scores have been reported to examinees. Scoring, reporting, and credentialing resumed on about March 24, when corrected tables were mailed to GED Examiners and Administrators.

States that have already issued diplomas this year, based on the new GED Tests, have decided to honor them. Of these, only Alabama, Maine, Maryland, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin had issued a significant number of the diplomas. Other states where the new tests were introduced in February are less affected by the error. These states are Idaho, Minnesota, Mississippi, Nebraska, North Dakota, and South Dakota. Only a few diplomas were issued in any of these states before the errors were detected.

Other states now administering the new GED Tests include Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Florida, Iowa, and Rhode Island. However, no diplomas have been issued for the new tests this year in these states. With the arrival of corrected tables, all GED Tests awaiting evaluation will be rescored and diplomas issued accordingly.

Four additional states, scheduled to begin administering the new GED Tests on April 1st, will delay the introduction of the new tests for one month. These states are Arkansas, Georgia, Michigan, and Virginia.

No other states have been affected by the error. The same errors, however, led to incorrect conversion tables for the Official GED Practice Tests. All purchasers have been notified, and replacement tables will be mailed to these persons on about March 31. Corrections will be inserted in copies of the *Teacher's Manual for the Official Practice Tests*.

The GED Testing Service deeply regrets the delays and inconvenience caused by the incorrect tables. However, through the generous cooperation of those states affected, the interruption in scoring of the GED Tests and issuing diplomas was limited to about 3 to 4 weeks.

GED And The Mississippi Army National Guard

The Mississippi Army National Guard is aggressively helping soldiers improve their education levels. Captain Elton Berry, MIARNG Education Services Officer, shares the following information on completed, on-going, and planned activities.

- Approximately 1200 MIARNG members do not currently possess a high school diploma or an equivalent. To date, more the 450 have been given the Official GED Practice Tests.
- Twenty-five soldiers have, at their own initiative, attended local GED classes after taking the Practice Tests at their armory.
- Ninety soldiers are in special GED classes being offered in armories throughout the state.
- Ninety-seven MIARNG soldiers have taken the GED Tests with a passing rate greater than 90 percent.
- Over 200 soldiers are scheduled to take the GED Tests within the next six months.
- The Recruiting and Retention Non-Commissioned Officers are actively assisting Captain Berry by giving the GED Practice Tests as an element of their R & R program.

The Guard's educational commitment doesn't stop with the GED, however. Nearly 500 MIARNG soldiers are attending college classes being held in 16 armories located throughout the state.

"How Many Do I Have To Get Right?"

GED students often ask: "How many questions do I have to get right to pass the GED Tests?" The tables given here provide the answer to that question for each of the five GED Tests which have been revised and renormed for use in 1988.

Because answering the question for the GED Writing Skills Test is the most complicated, let's walk through an example. To use the tables, you have to know what the passing score requirement is in your jurisdiction. For example, suppose the passing score requirement is "a minimum standard score of 35 on each GED Test *and* an overall average standard score of 45 on the five GED Tests." Table 1 shows what standard scores result from various combinations of total essay score (the 2 to 12 scale on the left resulting from combining two essay reader scores of 1 to 6) and multiple-choice raw score (columns represent the number of questions answered correctly). By looking at the numbers in the body of Table 1, we see that there are several combinations of essay and multiple-choice scores that yield a 45. For example, the combination of an essay score of 8 and a multiple-choice score of 24 yields a standard score of 45; so does an essay score of 7 and a multiple-choice score of 28; etc.

Table 2 shows that answering 33 questions correctly on Test 2 (Social Studies) results in a standard score of 45. To get a 45 standard score on GED Tests 3, 4, and 5, you need to answer 33, 24, and 30 questions correctly respectively. To see these, find the standard score of 45 in the left column labeled standard score and read across that line to the raw score columns for GED Tests 2, 3, 4, and 5.

One way to put these raw scores into perspective is to express them as a percent correct. To do this accurately, you have to take into consideration that some items on the GED Tests are field test items; that is, these items are being "tried-out" for use on later GED Tests and, therefore, do not count toward examinees' scores. For example, Test 2 has 64 items on it of which 4 are field test items. That is, 60 of the 64 questions are actually scored in determining an examinee's raw score on the Social Studies Test. Knowing this and the tabled raw score of 33 correct for a standard score of 45 allows us to see that getting 33 right is 55 percent correct (33/60) on Test 2. Table 2 shows the total number of multiple-choice items and the number of field test items that appear on each of the five GED Tests. Using this information allows you to answer the examinee's question about how many they have to get right on a GED Test in terms of percent correct required (given the passing score requirement).

Caution must be exercised so as not to over-interpret the exactness of the tables. These tables are averages of score requirements across different forms of the GED Tests. Consequently, the numbers don't match any one form of the GED Tests that the examinee may take. Generally, the tables are accurate within plus or minus 3 items correct for various forms of a given GED Test. So, in answering the examinee's question relative to Test 2 and a standard score of 45, you should say: "You will need to get about 30 to 36 items correct to get a score of 45. This is about 50% to 60% of the items on the Test."

Readers interested in more detail about interpreting GED scores, the GED Tests' contents, or tips on preparing students to take the GED Tests should refer to the GED Testing Service publication *The Official Teacher's Guide to the Tests of General Educational Development* distributed for us by Contemporary Books.

When evaluating whether a student is likely to pass the GED Tests, we recommend the use of the GED Testing Service's *Official GED Practice Tests*. These tests provide estimates of the GED standard scores a student will likely achieve on the full length GED Tests. The *Teacher's Manual for the Official GED Practice Tests* also explains how to use the Official GED Practice Tests to evaluate the readiness of GED students. *The Official GED Practice Tests and the Teacher's Manual* are distributed for us by Prentice Hall (Cambridge).

TABLE 1
GED WRITING SKILLS TEST WEIGHTED COMPOSITE SCORE
Number of Multiple-Choice Items Correct (Raw Score)

Total Essay Score	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35
12					50											55									
11	45											50												55	
10					45												50								
9	40								45													50			
8			40											45											
7						40												45							
6	35											40												45	
5					35												40								
4	30										35												40		
3				30													35								
2		25										30													35

TABLE 2
GED STANDARD SCORES, PERCENTILE RANKS, AND NUMBER OF CORRECT ANSWERS

Standard Score	Percentile Rank (U.S.)	Test 1	Raw Score (Number of Correct Answers) Test 2	Test 3	Test 4	Test 5
80	99		60	60	40	50
75	99		59	58	40	50
70	98		58	57	39	49
65	93		56	55	38	48
60	84	SEE	53	52	36	46
55	69	TABLE	48	47	34	43
50	50	1	42	41	30	37
45	31		33	33	24	30
40	16		25	26	18	22
35	7		18	18	13	16
30	2		13	13	8	11
25	1		10	10	6	9
20	1		8	6	4	6
Number of test items		55 & 1 Essay	64	66	45	56
(number of field-test items)		(5)	(4)	(6)	(5)	(6)

Note: Numbers in the body of Table 1 represent standard scores for certain combinations of essay and multiple-choice raw scores. Multiple-choice raw scores are only given in the range 11 to 35, even though the raw score range is actually 0 to 50. The numbers provided in Tables 1 and 2 do not correspond exactly to any one GED Test form. They were obtained by averaging across several GED Test form conversion tables obtained through the 1987 administration of GED Tests to graduating high school seniors.

Learning Style: Theory and Practice

by James W. Keefe. National Association of Secondary School Principals. Reston, Virginia. 1987. ($7.00)

This excellent 48 page monograph summarizes research and practice in learning styles for a lay audience. Keefe explains the many competing schools of thought tying them together in an interesting and easily understood fashion.

Keefe also claims that while most learners (60%) have stronger visual than auditory perception, most instruction (80%) depends on auditory skills. He knows that some teachers fear that accommodating students' learning styles may handicap them by making them unable to learn in any other way when in fact we all can and *do* learn in many ways. Keefe emphasizes that learners should be exposed to a variety of learning styles but that new material, basic skills, and complex concepts and tasks should be taught in accordance with student preferences. Once learned, practicing a skill in a variety of ways helps to "flex" and develop the learner's mind.

Program Helps Parents Teach Kids

As part of the Adopt-A-School Program, Seminole Community College and Lake Mary Elementary School (Florida) have become "Partners in Excellence." Through these schools, a cooperative recruitment effort aims to enroll parents of elementary age children in adult education programs.

Entitled "Bear Hugs," its theme is "Little Bears Need Moms or Dads Who Can Help Them Learn." The more skills the parents have, the more they can effectively help their children with their studies, the program reasons.

For more information, contact Nancy Williams at the Seminole Community College, (305) 323-1450.

Holistic Scoring

by Laurine Paule, Southeastern Community College, West Burlington, Iowa

Read a paper. Score it. Judge its overall effectiveness. Don't analyze it. Don't make any marks. Just read it and judge it as a whole. Determine how well the writer has conveyed the ideas. That's what holistic scoring is all about.

This past June the first group of trainees, to become chief readers for GEDTS convened in hot and steamy Washington, DC, for a two-and-one-half day intensive training session on holistic scoring. A few had participated in some of the pilot projects to help GEDTS determine if holistic scoring was both feasible and reliable as a technique for scoring an essay portion of the Writing Skills Test. But for most it was a new experience.

We were a motley group of varied ages and backgrounds, male and female, black and white, coming from various parts of the United States and American Samoa. But we were all assembled for a common purpose—to learn how to score holistically and how to be Chief Readers so we could return to our home areas to train other readers in preparation for scoring the essay which will become a part of the GED Tests nationwide in 1988.

Joan Auchter, Writing Assessment Specialist for GEDTS, put us through the paces of scoring. We read essays, scored them, read more essays, and scored them. The scores were too arbitrary because all essays had been written by high school seniors and had been previously scored by the Writing Assessment Committee, a group highly experienced in holistic scoring. The committee had decided on a six point scale with six being the high score and one the lowest. From this they had written a descriptive guide for each score, describing the characteristics of papers typical of that score. This scoring guide became our guideline in scoring as it represented realistic expectations of what high school seniors could write and, therefore, was a valid basis to determine what could be expected from an equivalency test. As we scored, we gradually internalized the criteria so that we became more adept. Our scores had to be the same or contiguous to those awarded by the Writing Assessment Committee. Gradually we reached consensus. We were amazed!

"As we scored, we gradually internalized the criteria so that we became more adept. Our scores had to be the same or contiguous to those awarded by the Writing Assessment Committee."

We left Washington to return to our homes, knowing it was our responsibility to select readers and train them in the same spirit as Joan had trained us. The three of us from Iowa recruited local readers according to the guidelines of GEDTS. In September we each had a three-hour preparatory workshop in our respective community colleges prior to our meeting as a group near Des Moines the following week. We three Chief Readers worked together with guidance from our Iowa consultant, John Hartwig, for this first major training session to practice with and then certify the eighteen selected readers. Again the group was varied. One is a technical writer; some are currently teaching English; and others are recently retired English teachers. In November we each conducted site certification procedures at our respective campuses as specified by GEDTS.

GEDTS has carefully examined and prepared the way for Holistic scoring. Joan Auchter and John Hartwig have been readily available to answer our questions and provide guidance each step of the way.

The experience has been both challenging and professionally rewarding, a growing experience. Carolyn Keeney states, "The readers are all conscientious and interested in being 'A' scorers." Elaine Markuson adds that she can see a camaraderie developing among her readers, most of whom were strangers prior to being holistic readers. For me the concept of holistic scoring has been transformed from a textbook theory to a valid and feasible scoring technique. The readers are looking forward to February when all the preparation becomes a reality.

GED *Items* is published bi-monthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. This newsletter is not copyrighted and readers are invited to copy any part of the newsletter that has not been previously copyrighted. Credit should be given in accordance with accepted publishing standards. *Editor:* Susan Robinson. *Associate Editors:* Richard Metcalf and Douglas Whitney. *Contributing Editors:* Jean Lowe and Wayne Patience. *Contributors:* Linda Russell, Laurine Paule, Russell Dugas, Kim Wilkerson and Dolly Whelan. *Production and Circulation Manager:* Judy Allen.

(Judith S. Eaton, Board Chair, ACE; Robert H. Atwell, President, ACE)

News and Notes

In Cheektowage, New York, many new initiatives have been undertaken by the staff of Youth Careers, a program funded by grants from the Erie County Partnership and by Catholic Charities Manpower Services, Inc.

Among these is a new newsletter, *MESH*, which published its first issue November, 1987.

In Kentucky, the new State Director of Adult Education is Brenda Rollins. Brenda was formerly with Kentucky Education Television and the Student Services unit within the state department of education. She is a very engaging and friendly person, and a strong supporter of the GED program and GED Foundation. Brenda promises that Kentucky will again lead the nation in percentage increase in GED testing volume for 1987. Harlan Stubbs, GED Administrator, reports to Brenda who replaces Karla Gibbs. Karla has left the state department to start a day care center.

In Wyoming, Roseine Church has retired, and Lloyd Kjorness is now *Acting* GED Administrator. The department is in the midst of a re-organization and Lloyd's not sure whether or not he will be the GED Administrator in the end. He is very knowledgeable about the GED program, however, and attended the annual conference in Seattle last year. (Lloyd also attended the annual conference in Kansas City in 1984.) Until we hear otherwise, Lloyd is the Acting Administrator.

Finally, in Mojave, California, Charles Brannen, Chief Examiner at Mojave High School writes: "On December 15, 1987, I administered the GED Test Battery to Michael Kirk Seltzer. Mr. Seltzer is a college graduate, completing his degree from the University of Maryland while in the United States Air Force. Presently, he is attempting to become a Sheriff's Deputy for Los Angeles County and they require the GED in lieu of a high school diploma.

Mr. Seltzer scored a total of 343 on the GED Test Battery for an average score of 68. This score is the highest we've had in our three years of testing."

A Place To Learn:

An Exemplary Program in Louisiana
by Russell G. Dugas

An adult education program at the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center recently conducted the seventh formal graduation since its inception in October, 1984.

Robert Arceneaux, Lafayette Parish Adult Education Director, notes that to date, the program has enrolled over 910 inmates or jail personnel. The program, established by the Lafayette Parish School Board and in conjunction with the Lafayette Parish Sheriff's Department, was initially designed both to prepare inmates to take the GED Tests and to teach them life coping skills for after their release.

Most recently, Russell Dugas, the onsite Program Coordinator and Instructor, recognized the need for additional classes. Dugas expanded instructional services to include literacy training both in Spanish and English; English-as-a-Second Language courses; a Spanish course for deputies; and on-going adult basic education courses that allow the smooth transition of students to GED classes.

Mr. Dugas indicated that all these programs have been successful primarily due to inmate tutors. They have also been instrumental in helping 307 inmates and 12 deputies to receive GED diplomas, 23 functionally illiterate inmates to learn to read and function with newly acquired life-coping skills, and 16 non-English speaking inmates to get their diplomas. Dugas also notes that the sense of purpose, dedication, and enthusiasm of these tutors were responsible for this program's recent reception of a national award by the Lubach Literacy Council. Major Mike Mouton, LPCC Warden, also believes this program is a necessary part of LPCC's goal of inmate rehabilitation. In addition, Mouton notes, a recent survey of 200 previous graduates shows that *none* have been reincarcerated. In fact, two graduates are currently enrolled at a local university and seven are participating in various correspondence courses with Mr. Dugas as proctor. Many are also now out in the local community with responsible positions in the work force.

This exemplary program was funded in 1984 through a special grant from the Bureau of Adult Education, Louisiana Department of Education.

What the GED Has Meant to Me

[The following was submitted to us by Kim Wilkerson, a secretary at the University of Maryland. Kim, a GED graduate, wanted to "encourage others like myself." We think she has done just that.]

At the time I quit high school I didn't like myself very much. Each time I went on a job interview I liked myself even less. The fear that people would find out that I had quit school was overwhelming for me. As a consequence, I found myself accepting jobs that weren't really jobs that I wanted.

It wasn't until I was carrying my first child that I realized I was a good person. It was then I decided to take my GED without telling anyone about it. This was to be a test for *myself*.

Once I had taken the test, though, my anxiety began to show. Every day I checked the mailbox, telling myself I didn't really pass so I would be ready for the disappointment. Then, around the time I gave birth to my daughter, my GED test results arrived in the mail. I peered in the envelope scared to death. But there in bold black letters, I saw *HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA* with my name on it! I was so proud I just wanted to scream and tell the world that this dream had come true.

"How I wish everyone going through this disappointment in themselves for quitting school could just take that one step...."

Finally, I went on a job interview for a position I liked. I have no doubt that even the *knowledge* that I had my GED was an asset to getting that job. Oh, the feeling when I wrote down that I had my GED, knowing that I really did! Now there would be no more lies.

Since that time, I have grown to the top in my field and have started college to pursue an even greater education. How I wish people going through this disappointment in people for quitting school (no matter what the reason) could just take that one step to show *people* (not the world, not even their spouses) that a GED can change people's lives forever. I know—because it really changed mine.

Ask The Experts ....That's You!

How do you select instructional materials?

Janet Niblock, ABE/GED Coordinator in Montgomery County, Maryland, shared their process in selecting new instructional materials for GED classes which meet two nights a week for 14 weeks.

Janet and her supervisor, Bernie Ruark, decided that *teachers* should make the selection according to standards set by the main office. They also wanted to assure that selected books met the specifications of the new GED Tests and included exercises which looked like the new tests. Accordingly, they ask such questions as: Does the math book have a formulas page? Do the math questions have alternative answers such as "insufficient information"? Are there questions in science and social studies that address the kinds of critical thinking tested in the 1988 Tests? Does the book seem friendly?

In their year-long review process, every teacher had a chance to look at publishers' samples along with the *Preview* booklet and the *Official GED Practice Tests*. They then developed a set of criteria for selection. Other questions in their criteria include: Are instructions and examples clear for each exercise? Are exercises presented in order of increasing difficulty? Is there enough practice? Is the type easy to read? Janet says they concluded that all materials had some drawbacks and some strengths.

Here at GEDTS, we are pleased at the growing level of quality in GED materials which are both graphically appealing and interesting to adults. Certainly, it seems that there is something available for a wide variety of students and teacher needs. We would also suggest that you ask yourself what assumptions the publisher is making about learners. Do they assume the adult student is in a class with teacher-made enrichment materials? Are answers clearly explained for students who work alone at home? If your class is heavily composed of women, foreign, minority or young students, are the materials of interest to them as well?

These good ideas are from a program with GED classes. Let's hear from other programs that use tutors or multi-level learning centers. How do *you* select materials? Write Jean Lowe at GEDTS.

For GED Examiners Transporting Tests

Question: I would like to offer the GED Tests at the County Jail once a month. How can that be arranged?

Answer: If you want to give the GED Tests at a jail, hospital, or other site in your community, the first step is to call your state, provincial, or territorial GED Administrator. He or she will want to know *exactly* how you plan to do this. Who will administer the GED Tests? Who will transport them? (Only a Chief or Alternate Chief Examiner is allowed to transport and administer the GED Tests.) Before requesting approval, be sure you read Sections 4.55 and 8.1 of the *GED Examiner's Manual*. Scoring stencils *cannot* be transported. Testing off-site poses some additional problems. Such as, where at the site will the tests be stored? Should there be an interruption in testing? (In jails, for example, often prisoners must return to their cells to be counted during the day. This is a time when tests can easily be lost during the confusion.)

Your Administrator will decide if there is a need for testing at the institution you have suggested. If your request is approved, your GED Administrator will write to GEDTS requesting that your contract be amended. GEDTS then prepares and signs a formal addendum and sends it to the GED Administrator for his or her signature. Next the addendum is sent to you for your signature and the signature of your chief administrative officer. (This might be the superintendent of schools or the president of the college where your center is located.)

When you have obtained all four required signatures (including your own), return the pink copy of the addendum to GEDTS. Your addendum will automatically appear on your annual contract each year. Please note, however, that addenda are not considered approved nor are they added to the computer files until the signed pink copy is returned to GEDTS.

New GED Brochures

GEDTS has developed two new information brochures that describe the revised GED Tests and offer information for *prospective students and examinees.* English and Spanish versions are available, with space left on each for adding your address and/or phone number so that interested persons can be helped immediately.

You may obtain the GED brochures FREE from GEDTS. Be sure to indicate the number you want (in multiples of 100) and the language edition(s) desired. Contact Linda Russell at GEDTS.

GED For Older Adults

The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has also developed a brochure that encourages older adults to complete their GED diplomas. The attractive flier, entitled "Wish you had finished high school? You can do it NOW!" is free as well and can be obtained by writing: Publication D13048, Fulfillment, AARP, 1909 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20049.

Wisconsin Raises Minimum Scores

Wisconsin residents who begin testing in 1988 will have to meet significantly higher GED score requirements. Effective in January, Wisconsin requires standard scores of 40 or better on each of the five GED Tests in addition to an average score of 50 or better. (The state formerly required a 35 minimum and a 45 average.)

Last spring, GEDTS and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction collaborated on a study involving the administration of the revised GED Tests to a sample of the state's graduating high school seniors. The Wisconsin seniors earned scores that were significantly higher than those earned by the national sample of seniors.

For persons who began GED testing in 1987 or earlier, the state will continue to apply the old score requirement until July 1, 1988. After that, all examinees will have to meet the new requirements. For additional information about the new policies, contact Henry Hendrickson, GED Administrator at (608)267-9245.

New GED Administrators

We would like to welcome the following new GED Administrators to the GED Testing Program—
Arkansas: Archie Musselman
Idaho: Don Carpenter
Kansas: Philip Thomas
Massachusetts: Robert Bickerton
Minnesota: Ellen Sushak

Reviewing The New GED Tests

by Dolly Whelan

As an adult educator and coordinator of the Adult Basic Education and GED program for Fairfax County Public Schools in Virginia, I have felt the same anxiety that students and other teachers have about the 1988 GED Tests. Most specifically, I have been concerned about the addition of an essay to the Writing Skills Test and the emphasis on higher order thinking skills in all portions of the test battery.

Recently however, I was pleasantly surprised when I had an opportunity to participate in the final forms review of the 1989 tests in Writing Skills and Interpreting Literature and the Arts. In the final forms review, the last step before the tests are administered to high school seniors, adult and secondary educators are asked to look at the tests as a whole to see if they are fair, reasonable, and consistent with the test specifications. Prior to this test review, each of the test *items* has been reviewed many times by subject matter experts, tried out on GED candidates, and reviewed by the test editors so that every individual question has been found suitable for use on the test. But still a final test, when viewed as a whole, might overemphasize one viewpoint, one theme, or even one region of the country more than it should. To avoid this and as one final review, each content area editor assembles a committee to consider the following: Does the test as a *whole* represent the content, skills, values, and knowledge considered to be among the lasting outcomes of a high school education? Is the reading level appropriate? Are the item contexts likely to be familiar to adults? What about racial or gender bias? After hours of reading and discussion, these forms all met with our approval.

"...each content area editor assembles a final committee to consider the following: Does the test as a *whole* represent the content, skills, values, and knowledge considered to be among the lasting outcomes of a high school education?"

"After hours of reading and discussion, these forms all met with our approval."

Seeing the actual tests has reassured me and helped to allay my fears. As you know, the new Literature and the Arts Test is made up of excerpts from classical and popular literature and commentary. These very enjoyable selections were excellent examples of a high school curriculum. They not only brought back memories of literature classes, but they also piqued my interest in going back and rereading some of these selections in their entirety. I am confident that teachers can help their students by familiarizing them with some of these authors and their works and leading group discussions about the selections. (See the *Official Teacher's Guide to the Tests of General Educational Development* for a list of *representative* authors.)

As you also probably know, the new Writing Skills Test has two sections: multiple choice questions and an essay. The multiple choice section is composed of passages with numbered sentences and examinees are asked questions pertaining to specific parts of some of the numbered sentences. On the whole, proofreading a passage for errors is more practical than looking for punctuation or word choice errors specifically. Part I of this test deals with everyday grammatical problems presented in a less threatening format, while the essay topics in Part II deal with situations which will be familiar to all students. To prepare students for the Writing Skills Test, teachers can use a variety of writing activities including keeping journals, which we have found encourages students to write and proofread their own work.

Finally, being part of this review team has given me a unique opportunity to reduce my own fears and share with others what I learned about the new GED Tests. These tests provide for a more direct and practical application of student knowledge. In all, they promise to be a welcome change!

[In the next several issues, this last page will be devoted to the discussion of other key GED issues by experts in the field.]

Vol. 5, No. 2
March/April, 1988

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VOL. 5, NO. 3 May/June 1988 • The Newsletter of the GED Testing Service • Washington, D.C.

GED Credibility and Acceptability:

Pennsylvania Delivers Some Thought-Provoking News

A 310 project entitled "GED Credibility and Acceptability" was developed by Adult Education Linkage Services in Troy, Pennsylvania this past year. Its purpose was to obtain information from employers and GED graduates as to attitudes and practices of Pennsylvania businesses towards the GED credential.

First, a survey form was mailed to 178 employers throughout the state with a statistical sampling dictating representation on the basis of geographic location, number of employees (including the 50 largest employers in Pennsylvania), and the type of business being conducted.

This initial survey, containing 27 questions, was accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and requesting information about the "awarenesses and attitudes of individuals like yourself who are responsible for hiring policies and practices, especially as these awarenesses and attitudes relate to adults who dropped out of high school, but earned their high school credential through the General Educational Development Tests."

The letter and survey *purposely avoided* any information about the GED Tests or GED preparation programs, since a tangential purpose of the project was to determine what effect additional information might have upon employer attitudes. The initial survey was followed by a second letter and a shorter survey (with 20 questions) to employers who did not respond to the initial request. This resulted in a combined return of 68%. Ten percent of the respondents were then interviewed in person.

An additional dimension was introduced by surveying a sample of GED students and graduates who had satisfactorily completed a test preparation program and who had interviewed for at least one job. (These adults were located throughout the state and identified by adult education program personnel.)

> "We would characterize the most severe problem encountered in this project to be the lack of awareness and knowledge of Pennsylvania employers as to the nature of the GED program and the characteristics of GED graduates....Although we strongly recommend the implementation of similar surveys, especially at the local level, we feel any further survey of employer attitudes must be preceded by a comprehensive program of informational education."

Although the return rate for information was statistically high, project director Dave Fluke cautions against the project results being used as a definitive survey of Pennsylvania employer attitudes. And yet, the project did identify some consistent patterns in employment practices and employer attitudes.

"We would characterize the most severe problem encountered in this project to be the lack of awareness and knowledge of Pennsylvania employers as to the nature of the GED program and the characteristics of GED graduates," the project final report states. "Although we strongly recommend the implementation of

(continued on page 3)

Preparing for Test 2: Social Studies

by Joyce Downey

GED teachers should know that the revised GED Social Studies Test reflects the renewed emphases in the high school curriculum (in the United States and Canada for their respective editions). And though there are no dramatic changes, the following will be useful in preparing students for the revised test:

- Remind your students of the *basics*, that Social Studies includes *history*: an interpretation of important events in our country and the world; *geography*: a study of the relationships between the natural environment and human activity; *economics*: a study of how people produce and use resources; *political science*: a study of governments, laws, and the process of using power; and, the *behavioral sciences*: a study of people as individuals, people in groups, and people in cultures.
- Inform your students that the Social Studies questions tend to emphasize *how social studies issues and concepts are related to each other in real life*—such as how political

(continued on page 6)

Inside *Items*

GED and Industry

Reader Survey Results

GED Success Story

Writing Tips

and more . . .

GED Success Story:

Maine's GED Administrator

Clayton Blood, GED Scholarships

Dana L. Green, Director of Waterville's Adult and Community Education program, recently announced that his program will be granting the first annual Clayton Blood Honorary Scholarships during the 1988 graduation year-ending ceremonies. In a letter announcing the scholarships to the Commissioner of Education, Eve Bither, Director Dana Green stated: "Waterville's Adult & Community Education program would like to take this opportunity to notify and congratulate Mr. Clayton Blood for being named as our GED Honorary Scholarship. Beginning May 20th, 1988, and each following year one to three scholarships will be awarded in his name to our outstanding GED graduating students who are continuing their educational goals."

Director Green further stated, "Your efforts on behalf of Maine's GED program are evident everywhere you turn. Maine has more adult students entering into our statewide Adult & Community Education programs, starting new careers in Maine's vocational schools, and enrolling into our university system, due to your dedication and concern. This has not gone unnoticed within our community and we'd like to recognize you in this special manner for the years to come.

"We invite you to be present next year when the first recipients are awarded their scholarships. We feel that these scholarships will stand as a monument to your many hours of devotion and your professionalism within Maine's educational system.

"You are to be congratulated on this attainment and for the highest ideals that it will represent in our profession."

Director Dana Green has stated that "we all should look around our programs and take action to recognize the leaders and contributors to the field of Adult Education and honor them at our graduations and award banquets. It's the single greatest sign that we appreciate their long hours, dedication to others, and service to the citizens we all serve. Remember that if fame is only to come after death, then no one is in a hurry for it to happen."

And a heartfelt congratulations to Clayton from all of us at GEDTS!

Excerpted from Maine Adult and Community Education Newsletter.

GED Staff Training in Maine

One of Clayton Blood's major contributions to the GED Program in Maine has been the development of an ongoing staff training program. Funded by the state department of education, the training has been a cooperative effort of Clayton's office and the University of Maine, Orono, staff development project.

In a recent telephone interview, Clayton noted that the goal of this program has been "to walk all our practitioners through the various phases to prepare for the 1988 exam." All practitioners, that is, everyone working with GED students, were required to attend at least Phases 1 and 2.

As illustrated by the graphic below, Phase 3 consisted of a 6-hour session for teaching writing. During this phase, a writing manual was also developed and written. Phase 4, originally designed as a follow-up, has been changed to a training session for scorers of GED practice test writing samples.

In all, the training effort has been very successful. 450 teachers have completed Phases 1 and 2, approximately 300 have completed Phase 3, and Phase 4 is just beginning, with 120 teachers having completed this phase as we go to press.

For further information, call Clayton Blood at (207)289-5854.

GED STAFF TRAINING

GED Orientation	Program Intake for Prospective GED Candidates	Writing Component	Follow-up	Licensing
• Overview of GED Program • Reason For New Test • Intro to Holistic Scoring	• Intake Procedures —Pretest • Holistic Scoring for Administrators —to establish program objectives	• Time Management for GED Teachers • Writing Process • Assessing Writing • Skill-Specific Instruction • Teaching for the Test	• Teacher-Directed • Questions & Answers	• GED Tests Sites • Staff Personnel
3 Hours	3 Hours	6 Hours	3 Hours	

Celebrities Pass Test to Promote GED on TV

Nine Minnesota celebrities found out just how challenging the GED Tests can be when they took a sample GED Test in Minneapolis this past January, to promote the statewide broadcasts of GED on TV. Former Vikings Matt Blair and Stu Voight joined public and private sector leaders to answer 20 questions taken from the sample GED Tests while the media and lunchtime passersby looked on in the IDS Building Crystal Court. Following their test, the celebrities posed for pictures in graduation caps and gowns.

The nine who tested their knowledge were: Lieutenant Governor Marlene Johnson; Minneapolis Mayor Don Fraser; Stu Voight and Matt Blair, former Minnesota Vikings; Minneapolis City Council Member Barbara Carlson; St. Paul City Council Member Jim Scheibel; John Pearson, Chairman and CEO, Northwestern National Life Insurance Company; David Koch, Chairman and CEO, Graco, Inc.; and John B. Davis, Jr., former Minneapolis Superintendent of Schools and current chairperson of the Minnesota Adult Literacy Campaign.

The event was sponsored by the GED on TV Task Force to kick off the 1988 statewide broadcast of GED on TV which began the week of January 4. Coverage of the event by newspapers, TV and radio resulted in several hundred calls over the next few days to the Basic Skills Hotline with requests for information about the broadcast.

Karen Hering, excerpted from *Connections*, A Literacy Newsletter for Minnesotans.

Credibility *(from page 1)*

similar surveys, especially at the local level, we feel any further survey of employer attitudes insofar as the GED credential is concerned must be preceded by a comprehensive program of informational education."

"The letter and survey *purposely avoided* any information about the GED Tests or GED preparation programs, since a tangential purpose of the project was to determine what effect additional information might have upon employer attitudes."

When asked to rank characteristics of job applicants in order of hiring importance, most (90%) identified work experience, training, or attitude as #1. However, 76% stressed the importance of a diploma by indicating they felt everyone needed at least a high school diploma in today's world of work.

The primary difficulty encountered by the project was the ignorance of most employers toward what the GED credential means and what is involved in procuring the diploma through GED testing.

26% of the employment managers/personnel managers/human service managers surveyed did not know if their businesses presently employed GED graduates or had personnel working toward the GED.

All employers indicated they would give GED graduates the same consideration for employment as "regular" graduates, but 27% responded to another question by saying they would prefer to hire applicants with "regular" diplomas.

The same degree of inconsistency was seen in responses to questions relating to employer awareness of what the GED program is. To the question "Is a GED credential the equivalent to a regular high school diploma?", 38% responded "yes" while 34% answered "Don't Know." When the survey changed the wording slightly, however, and used the term "GED diploma" rather than GED credential, 79% said "yes" and only 11% said "Don't Know."

Conclusions: Employers in Pennsylvania are not familiar with the General Educational Development Tests nor programs designed to prepare adults for the tests. The final report, along with materials used in the survey, a tabulation of employer responses, and additional information is available without charge from Advance (800) 992-2283.

For purposes of comparison, it should be noted that a similar survey, conducted among Denver employers in 1983, found that a "significant number (96%) of the respondents stated that they accepted the GED credential. Additionally, 83% of the respondents consider the GED certificate and the high school diploma equally in their hiring preference when all other factors are equal. Generally speaking, the GED credential is an important consideration given by many of the employers." (Source: GED Research Brief #11, August 1986.)

And earlier, in 1981, a study of 219 employers in Saskatchewan, Canada, concluded that "99.6% of the employers surveyed accept a GED certificate in itself or as part of the criteria needed for hiring." (Source: "Acceptance of General Educational Development [GED]" conducted by the Department of Continuing Education, Community Colleges Branch, Saskatchewan, 1981.)

The difference among these three studies, however, seems to be that Pennsylvania "*purposely avoided* any information about the GED Tests or GED preparation programs, adult education, etc., since a tangential purpose of the project was to determine what effect additional information might have upon employer attitudes." On the other hand, one of the purposes of the Saskatchewan study was to "explain the GED testing program to the employers unfamiliar with the program." The Denver study did not address this distinction either way.

Clearly, results of the Pennsylvania and Saskatchewan surveys would indicate that employer acceptance of a GED diploma is improved by *knowledge* about the GED Tests. With the beginning of this new generation of tests, what better time to improve our outreach—and thus the future of our GED graduates?

The majority of this article was excerpted from "What's the Buzz?" the adult education newsletter of Pennsylvania.

Results of Our Reader Survey

Many thanks to everyone who responded to the first *Items* survey. Nearly 120 of you took the time to answer our request for feedback and those responses came from 38 states! (For sheer numbers, by the way, North Carolina and Pennsylvania led the pack.)

What we read was both heartening and informative. First of all, it seems that there is a real need for a GED newsletter if your sample response is any indication. The majority said they read the *Items* cover to cover and share the newsletter with other adult educators. Of course, we encourage this, as well as bulk subscriptions (write our Circulation Manager for information).

Next, we found that people view the teaching tips and success stories as the two most valuable features. Readers indicated that they often use the teaching tips in the classroom (see pages 5 and 6 of this issue) and the success stories for inspiration! As Linda Dickinson of Havelock, North Carolina, wrote: "The success stories remind me that the test is more than a test. It is a door opening to offer second chances to those who need them."

Following these popular features, readers enjoy "Ask the Experts" and "News and Notes."

Of course, we were encouraged by the generous praise, but we also need to know how the newsletter can *better* serve our readers. Following are some of the topics that our respondents would like to see in the future:

- Information on Special Editions
- Marketing Strategies
- GED and the Elderly
- Theories of Adult Education
- Funding Sources
- Information on the Spanish GED
- More Sample Essay Topics
- Information on Adult Education Legislation
- Practical Suggestions for Teaching the Learning Disabled
- Review of Teaching Materials

With the exception of reviewing teaching materials (at this time, it is our policy not to review commercial materials), each of these topics will be addressed in the future.

Finally, we encourage our readers to submit material for publication (see above for topic suggestions) and to comment on any articles that appear. For as Jewel Eggley of Cape Girardeau, Missouri, wrote: "The GED newsletter makes everyone feel a part of a team." With your help, we hope it always will.

More Writing Tips...

While free writing is important to the writing process, teachers should be reminded that it is not *all* important. Students also need to learn form, structure, and ways of organizing ideas. Formal writing can be done with a cross-curricular approach, too. Students are assigned real subjects, based on their subject-matter studies. For example, they might be asked to "list and explain three causes of the Civil War" following a reading and discussion of that conflict. This kind of writing calls for a structured approach, starting with an outline, and the outline itself might be the idea generator.

Teachers could also assign topics such as these:

- Describe the process of photosynthesis.
- Explain how the theory of supply and demand works in an economy.
- Explain and give examples of faulty pronoun reference.
- Describe the way you work out word problems in math.
- What are three ways for discovering word meanings? List them and illustrate how you would apply them to the word "liquify."

Writing across the curriculum programs characteristically take a process approach. That is, rather than assigning a writing and then taking up the final drafts to read and grade, a teacher might intervene at any stage in the process. First, the teacher is involved in idea exploration, assisting students in ways of discovering and uncovering ideas, engaging in a dialectic that opens up the student's mind to new ways of looking at ordinary things. And the teacher helps the student to find new information that is rated first on content, then on form.

Listening to a paper being read aloud, students learn to respond positively and personally wherever possible. They look for purpose, audience, organization, and evidence. They should also be able to summarize the main point. To help them, students might be given directions such as these:

- In a sentence, summarize the writer's main idea.
- Name two things you liked about this piece of writing.
- Did you like the beginning? How could it be improved?
- Did the conclusion seem like a good finish?

Excerpted from *The Catalyst*, Arizona Adult Education newsletter, November 1987.

FOR EXAMINERS

Questions about the New Answer Sheets

Several Chief Examiners have called us with questions (and some complaints) about the new answer sheets. Why are there eight pages now? Why isn't there a score report box? When we next print the answer sheets, probably in early 1989, you will see some, but not all, of the revisions that you have suggested.

Embedding the "tryout" questions in the new tests requires that we have background data on each candidate to help us to evaluate the appropriateness and fairness of future test questions. To be useful, the demographic data has to be linked by means of the pre-printed numeric code (called a litho code) to examinees' answers to the embedded questions. A single eight-page answer booklet means that most examinees will only have to code this information once.

Some of you have asked us to shade all areas of the test that the examinee may not write on. We will do this for future printings. We hope that the shading will remind you, too, not to write on those areas. (Marks in those areas make the computer spit out the marked answer sheets and drive the poor GEDTS computer scanner crazy.)

You have also asked for a space on each page where examinees can write their test booklet serial numbers. We hope there will be enough space for this change next year.

Some centers that hand score the tests have asked for a place on the answer booklet to record raw scores. One reason we did not do this is that you cannot show a raw score to the examinee. If you test over a period of several days, you have to return the booklet to a candidate for the next part of the test. For the same reasons, you are asked to score by counting only correct answers (not marking wrong answers) and to make your calculations on another piece of paper that the candidate will not see.

Please continue to send us your advice—we can't always do as you ask (partly because you don't all tell us the same thing!), but we always listen and discuss your suggestions.

Preparing Your Students for the New GED Writing Skills Test

by Judith A. Brown, Washington Adult Center, Rockford, Illinois

Relax! The new essay portion of the 1988 GED Writing Skills Test doesn't need to raise your blood pressure, keep you awake at night, or foster ideas regarding a career change. Transitional suggestions such as those that follow may assist you as you endeavor to prepare yourself and your students for successful writing in the testing situation.

- Remember that change isn't always easy. But the challenges you accept and conquer give you a new appreciation of your potential and a deeper sense of confidence.
- Believe in yourself and in your ability to communicate the techniques and skills these changes demand.
- Suspend negative labeling regarding your students' ability to become knowledgeable, even fluent writers.
- Attend writing seminars, conferences, and in-service-training sessions with a positive, open mind. Seek to discover as many new ideas and approaches as possible.
- Experiment with others' suggestions. Evaluate! Retain what works; discard what is ineffective.
- Create your own patterns, methods, and materials. Bring *your* wisdom, *your* skills, *your* originality to the forefront. Don't imitate others. Be the best *you* that you can be.
- Use cooperative learning. View yourself as a competent, skillful facilitator, remembering that both students *and* teacher are learning and teaching. (You don't have to have all the answers.)
- Focus on becoming a better writer yourself. Pay attention to your own writing process. Share your writing and your writing experiences with students.
- Establish a daily, directed writing period for students. Their skills will develop with practice. Once they realize how to generate ideas through processes such as clustering, they will anticipate the writing sessions. (Students *do* like to write! Believe that!)

Excerpted from The Adult Educator, the newsletter of the Northern Area Adult Education Service Center, Fall 1987.

Teaching Adults is Different—or is it?

For years, adult educators have been passing along the truism: teaching adults is different from teaching children and youth. And they were right. For many reasons—smaller classes, higher motivation, absence of authoritarian supervision—teaching adults is different. Teachers of adults have long tried to individualize instruction, to boost each student's self-esteem, and to make instruction relevant. In fact, the word "relevant" was familiar to teachers of adults long before it achieved its current popularity with teachers at other levels.

"For many reasons—smaller classes, higher motivation, absence of authoritarian supervision—teaching adults is different."

Here are some examples of the methodology and the laws of learning applicable to adults. Students are more likely to learn a piece of information or master a particular skill if they know "what's in it for them"...if they can see fairly immediate use for their new learning. If their ultimate goal is to get a job, they may wonder why they need to learn to spell. It is the teacher's job to show them that misspellings on a job application form may lower their chances of being hired. (In this case, the words they are learning to spell should be the ones they're likely to *need* to spell.)

Students also need to know what they really want from the course. The teacher can't tell them this, but with the teacher's help they should figure it out themselves—and keep it firmly in mind. The teacher must further discover the students' motives and reinforce them constantly by showing the connection between what they *are* learning and what they set out to learn. By asking questions in the first class session, during group discussion, or through informal chats with students, it is usually possible to discover student goals. "Often the teacher will find student goals are unrealistic," says Curtis Ulmer in *Teaching the Disadvantaged Adult*. "In these cases, the teacher must work with the student to bring their expectations down to a reasonable level."

Both adults and children bring their emotions with them to class. Threats of withdrawal of the teacher's approval affect students acutely, and may even cause them to drop out of class. Adults are just as sensitive as children to sarcasm or ridicule from the teacher, to coldness, rejection, or judgmental attitudes. Whereas children may react more openly—with discipline problems or by skipping school—adults react with silence or inattention and with their ultimate weapon: dropping out of class.

"Activity on the part of the student is essential to learning," according to *Administration of Continuing Education*, a NAPCAE publication. "Principles that are memorized do not produce the same retention as those that are reasoned out by the student and actually used. A lesson on reference sources is more realistic and meaningful when conducted in the library, having the students actually find material by using the card catalog themselves."

The experience and knowledge students bring to class should be used to help them learn. This approach, long familiar to teachers of adults because their students often have wide knowledge and experience, is a tremendous help in motivating young students as well. It also boosts the students' self-concept when the teacher occasionally looks to them for advice...or asks for their special knowledge of a topic. For example, one student may be able to advise others on how to get along with co-workers on a job, something he has learned through practical experience.

"Both adults and children bring their emotions with them to class. Threats of withdrawal of the teacher's approval affect students acutely, and may even cause them to drop out of class."

A learning experience that is interesting, vivid, and intense is remembered longest. A detailed account by the teacher or from a textbook can be dull...but it can be brought to life by a guest speaker, by role playing, through a panel discussion by several students who are questioned by the others, by a short film on the subject, and other imaginative learning activities. Methods should vary as much as possible in any course.

Excerpted from *News*, a Newsletter for ABE Teachers in Nebraska, December, 1987.

News and Notes

In Utica, Mississippi, Hinds Junior College has been operating a program called Dial-a-Teacher. Frequently, adults are unable to attend established classes because of other responsibilities, or because they wish to remain anonymous. Dial-A-Teacher is designed to provide potential students with an opportunity to learn.

Instruction is provided over the telephone for four hours each evening on Mondays and Tuesdays from the Raymond Campus of Hinds Junior College. Students also receive instruction through the mail, or can be referred to local adult education or literacy programs.

For more information, contact Dr. Eddie E. Dawson, Director, Continuing Education, Hinds Junior College, Highway 18 West, Utica, MS 39175, (601) 885-6062.

In Austin, Texas, the project staff at Austin Community College developed a handbook that describes a step-by-step process for establishing cooperative ABE, GED, and ESL programs in the workplace. Marketing the adult education program, developing cooperative agreements, conducting needs assessments, and evaluating the cooperative program are some of the components discussed in the handbook. The manual is free from The Clearinghouse on Adult Education, U.S. Department of Education, Room 522, Reporters Building, 400 Maryland Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20202-5515, (202) 732-2396.

In Selma-Dallas County, Alabama, the public library recently received $25,000 from the U.S. Department of Education's Library Literacy Grant program. The library joined forces with Wallace Community College to start an innovative literacy program. Instead of providing space at the library or college, the two will send a van into the rural areas. The program targets the rural population because of their lack of transportation and child care. The van is staffed by a reading teacher provided by the college, a local volunteer literacy tutor, and a driver furnished by the library. For further information, contact Becky Cothran-Nichols, Assistant Director, Public Library, 1103 Selma Avenue, Selma, Alabama 36701.

Social Studies *(from page 1)*

power relates to a country's natural and human resources, how a person's choice or a country's policy is affected by traditions, beliefs, and values, or how a problem in society is linked to its peoples' historical roots.

- Tell your students that many of the questions require the ability to apply, analyze, or evaluate issues, and more often these issues are *global issues*, issues that affect the United States and Canada and nations all over the world.
- Reassure your students that their own experience of working, being a consumer, belonging to a family, reading newspapers, news magazines, and human interest stories, and listening to radio and television broadcasts are important preparation for the GED Social Studies Test.

In addition to these four guidelines, your students need a *foundation of knowledge* in the Social Studies, and especially in history and political science. Teachers can suggest that students study any of a number of readable and informative basic texts in civics and U.S. or Canadian history at adult learning centers or libraries. Students can read on their own, at their own pace.

With the foundation laid, the teacher should conduct discussions of the concepts studied. (See Science Editor's tips on discussion in the March issue.) And of course, one interesting way to do this is to take a look at current events in history, politics, and social trends. GED teachers can also look to news magazines and newspapers for simple, effective exercises for their students.

I suggest that teachers use a *simple model of instruction* to help their students read and think more critically and to boost the students' confidence.

First, ask students to collect clippings or notes about a current event or issue that interests them. Have them find written material and a graphic, such as a chart, map, or cartoon.

Then help students identify the important information by posing the following questions:

What are the main concepts or issues raised in this article?

Who is speaking in the material? What is the author's point of view? What information supports the author's point of view? Do you detect a bias?

What additional information do you need to understand or accept the author's points?

Why or how are the main ideas or issues controversial? Does your experience and knowledge contradict or support what you read?

How do these concepts and issues affect real peoples' lives, especially your life?

How can lawmakers, citizens, consumers, businesses, community groups, families, and *you* use this information?

To support this method of instruction, teachers can collect a file of current-events articles and interesting graphics to use in class. The more the students practice the line of questioning suggested (which can be added to by the teacher and students), the greater success they will enjoy in their own critical reading and the GED Social Studies Test.

Joyce Dauney is the Social Studies Editor at GEDTS.

Industry Classes

by Randall White, Program Coordinator, Northeast Alabama Area A.B.E. Program

When we started our first industry class seven years ago, we had no idea what a valuable resource we had discovered. We had found a gold mine of potential learners. Since that time, the number of industry classes has grown each year. These classes are located at the industry site for the employees of the particular industry. We've had 28 different classes in session this year in Marshall, DeKalb, and Jackson Counties with a cumulative enrollment of 291. By the end of 1987, we also had a large number of people pass the GED Tests from these classes.

In the three counties, various industries have participated in our program. In Albertville, for example, we have classes at Arrow Shirt Factory, Kendall, Inc., Keyes Fibre, Reeves Rubber, Bryant Furniture, Wayne Poultry, and Albertville City Employees. Other cities have the following sites: In Guntersville, our classes are at Gold Kist, Lee Plant, and Guntersville City Employees. In Scottsboro, industries with classes are Lozier, J. P. Stevens, and Fielderest Cannon. In Fort Payne, Vulcraft, Earthgrains, Heil Co., Gametime, and Sola, Inc., have classes located in their plant sites. In Boaz, we have a class at Lee Plant, and in Arab we have a class at SCI. Some of these industries also have two or three separate classes at each site due to large enrollment.

The majority of the industries pay the teacher's salary, but in Albertville most of the salaries are paid by a special federal 310 grant. Another appealing thing about these classes is the different incentives that the industries provide. Besides paying the teacher's salary and providing the site for the class, for example, the majority of the industries pay the fee for taking the GED Tests upon the learner's successfully passing them. A few industries also pay their employees their hourly wage while attending class. Some of the industries provide snacks at break. And a few have even given their employees a bonus when they pass the Tests.

Some industries also make the class available to dependent family members of their employees. Finally, in Albertville, all the participating industries provided funds for a large student banquet at the end of the year.

There are four factors that make these classes so successful: (1) The learners are in class with individuals with whom they work. (2) They are in a facility in which they feel non-threatened. (3) Transportation problems are partly eliminated because they are already on site. (4) Their employer encourages them to attend.

We are thus reaching potential learners who would probably not attend a regular class. I am fully convinced that in order to solve the illiteracy problem in Alabama, this is a route that we are going to have to take.

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Ask The Experts...That's You!

More on Selecting Instructional Materials

Bill Nelson, Chief Examiner and Adult Education Specialist for Henrico County, Virginia, and a former member of the GED Advisory Committee, says that many years ago he used to buy books and workbooks that looked promising, until he realized that teachers often didn't even try something new.

Since his goal is to select instructional materials that will be effective with students *and* acceptable to teachers, Bill says he first asks the state ABE Resource Center for their evaluation of materials. Once a product has passed this preliminary screening, he asks selected teachers to review its usefulness for themselves and other teachers. He then encourages the appropriate teachers to become familiar with the new book or workbook. Sometimes, he observes, teachers are reluctant to try new materials, preferring instead to stick with something they know. This way they don't make any decision about using a new product until they are completely familiar with it.

Bill also has a suggestion for publishers—why not perforate the pages of all workbooks? In Henrico County, as in most areas, they have students who are overwhelmed at the sight of an entire workbook. Bill would like to have pages that could be removed easily so that students could work on just a few pages at a time. He observes that this also would be a more economical way to provide materials for those students who come to a learning center just a few times. Another of Bill's ideas—reproducible worksheets in a looseleaf notebook that could be copied legally and used as needed.

Thanks, Bill.

Readers have been asking for suggestions on how to promote their programs. "We know that many more adults need a GED than are enrolled in our local programs; how can we reach them?" Please tell us how you are publicizing your program. If you are too busy promoting your program to write, you can call Jean Lowe with your ideas at (202) 939-9490.

A COMPARISON OF THE ENGLISH AND SPANISH GED TESTS

English Edition		Spanish Edition		
1. Writing Skills Test, Part I		1. Writing Skills Test, Part I		
• Sentence Structure	35%	• Sentence Structure	35%	(Content is the same or similar.)
• Usage	35%	• Usage	40%	(Emphasis on grammatical elements is unique to Spanish; e.g., number/gender agreement, sequence of tenses, use of the subjunctive and multiple object pronouns, etc.)
• Mechanics	30%	• Mechanics	25%	(Less emphasis is placed on punctuation and capitalization and more on spelling.)
Writing Skills Test, Part II: accessible topic for adults		Writing Skills Test, Part II: accessible topic for Hispanic adults		
2. Social Studies Test		2. Social Studies Test		
• History	25%	• History	20%	(U.S. History items offer sufficient information within a passage or graphic material to accommodate the examinee's Hispanic background.)
• Economics	20%	• Economics	20%	
• Political Science	20%	• Political Science	20%	
• Geography	15%	• Geography	15%	
• Behavioral Science	20%	• Behavioral Science	25%	(Contexts for the content areas above are Hispanic or global in nature.)
3. Science Test		3. Science Test		
• Life Sciences Biology	50%	• Life Sciences Biology	50%	(Items are the same or similar except for use of the metric system throughout most of the test.)
• Physical Sciences Earth Science Physics Chemistry	50%	• Physical Sciences Earth Science Physics Chemistry	50%	
4. Interpreting Literature and the Arts		4. Interpreting Literature and the Arts		
• Popular Literature	50%	• Popular Literature	50%	
• Classical Literature	25%	• Classical Literature	25%	
• Commentary about Literature and the Arts	25%	• Commentary about Literature and the Arts	25%	(All excerpts are from Hispanic writers with a deliberate emphasis on Caribbean, Central and South American writers.)
5. Mathematics		5. Mathematics		(Items are the same or similar except for use of the metric system throughout most of the test.)
• Arithmetic	50%	• Arithmetic	50%	
• Algebra	30%	• Algebra	30%	
• Geometry	20%	• Geometry	20%	

The Spanish GED Tests were written, reviewed, and edited by experts from Central and South America, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. This diversity was to account for the language and cultural variety among examinees of Hispanic origin.

"An Attitude of Mind":
The GED Advisory Committee Past, Present, and Future

by Allan Quigley, Ed.D., Assistant Professor and Regional Director of Adult Education, Pennsylvania State University

In 1940, John Buchan wrote that democracy is "primarily an attitude of mind...and not an economic structure or a political machine." Policy formation in a democracy, according to Buchan, is to be settled by "free discussion."

When I assumed the position of new GED Administrator in Saskatchewan, Canada, in 1978, I had an image of the GED Testing Service as being about as based on "free discussion," as user friendly, as the IRS. As for policy, for every question there seemed to be a policy ready made, each followed with a "comment," duly coded. If you could not find the answer, it obviously meant you did not know the Policy Manual well enough. New policies and revisions would arrive without warning, replacing existing policies. Heretofore justifying "comments" were summarily replaced with new policies and new self-justifying "comments."

It was difficult to imagine an organization which extended from Alaska to Puerto Rico, Newfoundland to Guam, as needing advice, especially from Administrators. The notion of democratic "free discussion" at One Dupont Circle seemed as remote as Washington itself.

Although most are aware that the GED Tests were constructed in 1942–43, many will not know that the American Council on Education appointed a consulting committee as early as 1943 to advise on the first levels of minimum achievement scores. In fact, ACE has consistently utilized expert and representative committees to advise on the GED program through the years. However, in December of 1979, as a result of attaining national status and extending to Canadian provinces as well as military bases overseas, the Director of the GED Testing Service was mandated to "appoint a National Advisory Committee, broadly representative of adult and secondary education, that shall meet to review the nature of the GED Tests and provide guidance to the GED Testing Service in conducting activities."

As representative for Canada and Chairperson of the GED Advisory Committee from 1985–87, I had the privilege of seeing how policy was arrived at. And, indeed, as the result of open discussion by an impressive cross-section of adult and secondary educators, the GEDTS is guided on policy issues. Even the most cynical would be impressed with the openness of discussion and careful follow-through by the staff on policy recommendations.

Examples during my tenure included policies affecting the essay writing questions, recommended changes to Section 7 of the Examiner's Manual (policies for testing the disabled), decisions on retesting under exceptional circumstances, and (ongoing, sometimes rather heated) discussions over the use of calculators in the Math Test. But what of the future?

"Policy," according to the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, derives from the Greek for "government or citizenship." Combined with the Latin, "*politus*," or "polished," it has come to mean "political sagacity" or a "politic course of action." There is little question in my mind that GEDTS is guided in policy matters by a sagacious, politic Committee today. But will this be adequate for the future?

As the GED program grows and issues become more complex, the level of shared responsibility for sound policy will grow correspondingly. In my view, the Advisory Committee will have to become more visible, more accessible, and even more broad based than it is now. Today, the new Administrator typically is not a participant in policy. I suspect that many do not even know who the members are, or who they represent. [See January issue of *Items*.] In my opinion, this will not be good enough for the issues of the 21st century. But whose responsibility is this whole area?

The death of democracy, according to Maynard Hutchins, will not come via an assassin or ambush, but by "slow extinction by apathy, indifference, and undernourishment." The ultimate issue for us all, then, is: Will the "attitude of mind" of *all* involved seek to extend the open discussion on the policy questions of the future?

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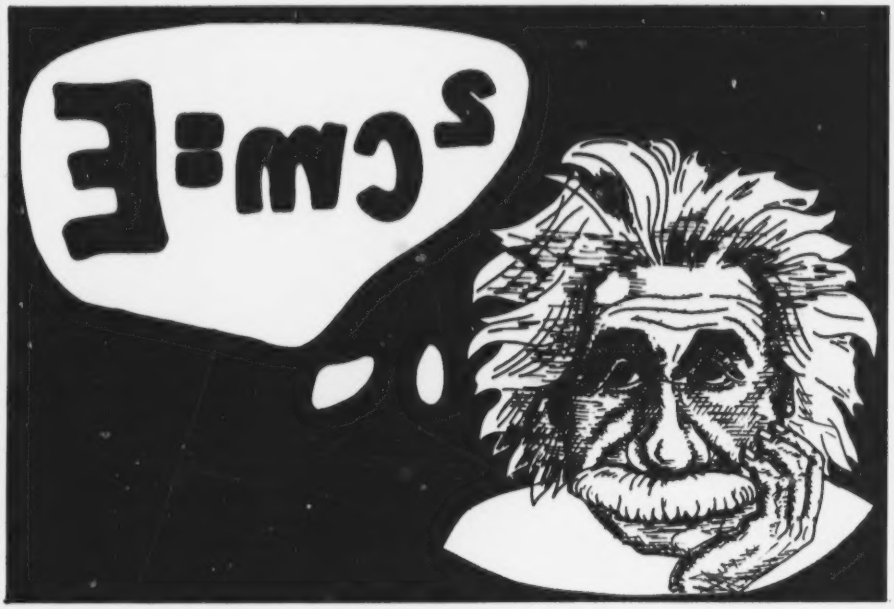
The GED and Learning Disabled Students



A learning disability need not be a formula for failure!

Suggestions for Teaching, Testing, and Understanding the Problem

by Susan Matson, Adult Educator
National Institute of Dyslexia

At a school in Maryland recently, I watched four young people, diagnosed with specific learning disabilities, work on a GED curriculum adapted to their needs. Their abilities were varied: a couple would likely "make it"; the other students wouldn't. And yet something here was ensuring a positive attitude toward learning. There was no clock-watching; eyes were glued to the teacher; laughter was frequent; responses to questions were fast and automatic.

There was nothing markedly "different" about any of the participants to the casual watcher. But these same individuals had once been branded by high school teachers as "lazy," "slow," "sloppy," "unmotivated," or "incapable." It was likely that previous instructors had been seeing the symptoms of learning disabilities without recognizing them. And it was obvious, too, that the same misunderstandings could just as easily have happened in a regular GED classroom. This need not be the case. As this article attempts to show, GED teachers *can*, on an informal basis, identify and appropriately teach those students who are at high risk for having learning disabilities.

Given the relative unavailability and expense of special programs,

(continued on page 7)

Examinees Score Both Higher and Lower on the 1988 GED Tests

January 1988 marked the beginning of a year of transition from use of the previous versions of the Tests of General Educational Development (GED) to the newly revised forms. By September, 37 states will have begun administering the new tests. Other states and the Canadian provinces are scheduled to change to the new tests throughout the remainder of 1988.

Periodically, the GED Tests are revised to reflect changes in curricular and instructional practices in the nation's high schools. The last major revision to the GED Tests was in 1978. Revisions in the 1988 GED Tests were guided by the recommendations of national advisory committees comprised of curriculum and adult education experts from throughout the country. In 1984, these committees reviewed the high school curricula nationwide and recommended changes in the content and format of the GED Tests. The two major changes in the tests are: (1) the inclusion of a writing exercise, or essay, as part of the Writing Skills Test; and (2) greater

(continued on page 6)

Inside this Double Issue of *Items:*

National GED Awards
Testing the Physically Handicapped
Test 4 Teaching Tips
and more . . .

GED Success Stories

(In this double issue of *Items*, we are pleased to offer two success stories about GED graduates.)

Marine Beirut bombing survivor gets GED

The surprise "suicide" bombing attack against American marines in Beirut was made at 5:30 a.m. on October 23, 1983. Two hundred thirty-seven marines were killed. Today only 76 marines are survivors of that bombing. Winston Oxendine, East Tennessee State University freshman, is one of them.

However, Gunnery Sergeant Oxendine was seriously disabled as a result of the bombing and thus forced to retire after 23 1/2 years of military service. He, his wife, Brenda, and his two sons, John and Winston, Jr. then returned to Greenville, Tennessee where Oxendine began work at a home for retarded and autistic children run by Comcare Corporation. He enjoyed this work setting but wanted professional training for working at a higher level with disabled persons.

Though Oxendine had always counseled fellow marines to get as much education as possible, he had not finished high school himself and knew first-hand the limitations this could place on one's career. So Oxendine inquired at Tri-cities Tech about the GED program. There he was referred to Gail Burleson, ETSU's Veteran's Upward Bound coordinator, who together with Sheridan Mitchell, counseled him on what review courses he should take to prepare for the GED. (Except for incidental fees, review courses in fields such as science, math, English, reading and social science are free of charge to any veteran who has served in the military at least 180 days since 1955. Veterans also receive free assessment testing, advising and help with financial applications. Some veterans with high school diplomas also go through the GED program as a refresher to prepare for college entrance.)

Since he had been out of school for 23 years, Oxendine spent two academic terms in review courses. Then he passed the GED on his first try, as do 95–98 percent of those who go through the Veterans Upward Bound program.

In Summer 1987, Winston Oxendine enrolled as a freshman at ETSU where he is continuing his studies while serving as a student worker in the Veterans Upward Bound office. The GED Testing Service is proud to recognize Winston Oxendine, American veteran and a most deserving graduate.

Adapted from an article by Valerie L. Schneider, *CAPS Newsletter*, East Tennessee State University.

Lamkins Gets GED to Fulfill Promise

On June 7th of this year, the proud parents of John Lamkins were in the audience at White River Vocational-Technical School for a graduation ceremony. Mr. and Mrs. Burl Lamkins made a special trip from Festus, Missouri, to see their 50-year-old son receive his GED diploma, along with his wife and 90 other graduates of the GED program from Jackson, Woodruff, Independence, and Lawrence counties.

A resident of Pumpkin Bend, Missouri, Mr. Lamkins is disabled because of a crippling birth defect. He does not consider himself handicapped, however, and in fact was able to complete the 11th grade before quitting school. Presently Lamkins, a hard worker, holds two part-time jobs.

When Lamkins decided to return for a GED, he had two motives: first, to fulfill his parents' dream and, second, to encourage his older daughter, Angela, to finish school and go on for higher education. This past fall Angela wanted to quit school in her senior year. When her father tried to talk to her, however, she replied that she was surprised a high school diploma was important to him, since her father had done all right and *he* had not finished school. But Angela's education was important to Lamkins—so important, in fact, that he promised his daughter he would get his GED diploma by the time she graduated if she would only stay in school. Angela accepted the challenge.

Lamkins then enrolled in GED classes under Mrs. Judy Hogue, GAE Instructor at White River Vo-Tech. According to Mrs. Hogue, this GED student came and stayed all day, took a lot of study material home at night, and completed 76 hours of GED classes. This determination, plus Lamkins' good attitude and helpfulness to students and faculty alike, prompted Mrs. Hogue to name him Student of the Quarter for the second quarter of the term.

Mr. Lamkins' wife, Beverly, was also a high school dropout. She said, "My mother couldn't afford to send all eleven of us to school. We had to pay room fees, and when I was in the 10th grade, she told me I wasn't doing any good anyway, so I would have to stay home and let the younger children go. Only two of the eleven of us finished high school." Beverly found time between housework and working as a cashier to help her husband study for his GED classes. At his insistence, she took the GED Performance Index Test. Now, her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Bequette, Sr., are making plans to help celebrate their own daughter's accomplishment.

Another proud member of the family will be in the audience at Vo-Tech graduation. Lamkins' nine-year-old daughter, Amy, a third grade honor roll student, will be applauding her parents' achievement along with Angela, a 1988 high school graduate, and her four grandparents.

Mr. Lamkins says, "I hope my experience inspires other people, young and old, who have dropped out of school or who are thinking about it to reconsider. An education is the only thing in life that no one can take away from you. I am thankful that I had the opportunity to go to Vo-Tech and for the wonderful accomplishments of my family this year."

Billye M. Crawford, adapted from the *Newport Daily Independent*.

Practice Test Corrected Tables

Persons who purchased copies of the *Teacher's Manual for the Official GED Practice Tests* during 1987 and early this year should already have received (from our distributor, Prentice Hall) a set of corrected conversion tables for the English language forms AA and BB to replace pages 85-90. Persons purchasing copies of the Manual since April should have received the corrected tables with their order.

The corrections are important because, without them, predicted GED scores will tend to be a few points higher than those the students will actually earn on the new tests. (See related article in Volume 5, Number 2 of this newsletter.) We want to be sure that all who have purchased a copy of this manual receive copies of the corrected tables promptly. If you need the corrections, please send a note and a self-addressed legal-size (or larger) envelope to Linda Russell at GEDTS.

Congratulations to Our 1987 GED National Award Winners

1987 was the third year of the GED National Awards Program. Each GED Testing jurisdiction may nominate an award winner who scores at least 300 on the GED Tests and meets other criteria for the awards program. The award winners ranged in age from 18 to 71. Their average total standard score on the GED Tests was 365. These winners took the tests to qualify them for further education, better jobs, and to prove to themselves they could do it. Here are some of their stories, plans, news, and hopes for the future.

"Continuing my education gave me a lot of confidence and pride in my achievement."
Anna Wooley, Guam

April Godsey left school at 15. Sixteen years later, she took the GED Tests and is one of the award winners from Washington state. She is now a student at Highline Community College and writes that she's thinking about studying "computer simulation, graphics, and the use of computers to improve life for the handicapped."

Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class Michael Inman left high school in Paducah, Kentucky, in 1979 and joined the Navy in 1980. In 1986, Inman enrolled in a GED class, and in 1987 became the GED National Award winner for the Navy. He intends to apply for the Navy Nuclear Medicine School.

"My next endeavor is a degree in environmental science or a related field. It's been a great year! Thank you for helping make it possible."
Ellen Bush, Oregon

Linda Bess, the West Virginia award winner, says she thought about getting her GED for years before beginning GED classes last year. She plans to enroll at West Virginia State College. Her family is proud of her. "It's taken me a long time to finally do this and they know what a sense of accomplishment it is for me."

The Nova Scotia award winner for 1987 is Annie Laurie Chiasson. Her sister, Rosemary Guest, was the 1986 winner. Both women left school in the '60's to work, but now plan for further education.

Congratulations and best wishes to these and all our award winners.

Jurisdiction	Award Recipient*	No. Tested in 1987
Alaska	Andrew T. Ratcliff Carl C. Seutter IV	2,446
Arizona	Rosemary E. Smith	10,769
Arkansas	Sheila A. Lowry	11,981
Connecticut	Jean A. Holcomb	6,712
Delaware	William C. Lynch	1,439
District of Columbia	Jane Johnson	1,709
Florida	Howard A. Frostman	45,515
Guam	Anna M. Wooley	198
Hawaii	Chris T. Axsom	2,821
Idaho	Leland B. Korb	3,405
Illinois	Betty R. Garippo	20,110
Indiana	Terry A. Thacker	12,656
Iowa	Lisa L. Ekstrom	7,656
Kansas	John C. Cambridge	8,341
Kentucky	Michael W. Purnell Carla L. Sigler	23,029
Louisiana	Patricia L. Duffy	11,605
Maine	Duncan G. Miller	3,394
Maryland	Sandra J. Benton	12,366
Massachusetts	Robert P. Delisle Robert W. Mitchell	12,992
Michigan	Andrew L. Haskins	28,335
Minnesota	Evagene S. Harris Michael G. Mickelson	8,495
Mississippi	Aaron T. Kinard	13,454
Missouri	Timothy A. Current	11,295
Montana	Rena D. Leeson	2,663
Nebraska	David R. Brannan	4,725
New Hampshire	Carolyn L. Sabine	2,128
New Jersey	Tracy Loigman	16,987
New Mexico	Stephen Whitman	6,895
North Carolina	Dorothy Bellavia	22,186
North Dakota	Rick L. Post	1,516
Ohio	Kevin J. O'Connor	16,954
Oklahoma	Tonia R. Garner	11,195
Oregon	Ellen R. Bush	8,976
Pennsylvania	Donna J. Richards	28,682
Rhode Island	Andrew J. Petrarca	2,991
South Carolina	James C. Steele	8,774
Tennessee	LaDonna R. Goodwin	17,300
Utah	John J. Underwood	4,539
Vermont	John R. McGinnis	2,494
Virginia	Karen J. Price	15,082
Virgin Islands	Nathalie I. Lynch	209
Washington	April D. Godsey George B. Medalia	13,875
West Virginia	Linda C. Bess	6,825
Wyoming	Debbie A. Suhr	1,828
Department of Defense		9,727
U. S. Air Force	A1C Ramona L. Marek	
U. S. Army National Guard	CADET Jeffrey L. Galliher	
U. S. Marine Corps	LCPL Gary M. Colwill	
U. S. Navy	HM2 Michael W. Inman	
Canada		
Alberta	Kenneth J. Wood	4,336
British Columbia	Phyllis L. Munro	4,366
Manitoba	Rodney K. Buhr Elaine D. Lamoureux	1,968
New Brunswick	Gale M. Stewart	2,536
Newfoundland	Sean K. Geehan	652
Northwest Territories	Paula L. Van Buskirk	120
Nova Scotia	Annie L. Chiasson	2,349
Prince Edward Island	David A. Farrow	225
Saskatchewan	Winny Elgersma	3,122

*Names received by GEDTS as of August 26, 1988

Have Your Students Watch Some TV

The Learning Channel (TLC) offers several programs for adults who wish to complete their education either for personal or career satisfaction. In particular, three TLC series are geared toward the large numbers of individuals who have not completed high school, are non-English speaking, or who would like to continue their education at a college level. ABE and GED teachers can use these series, offered by many cable systems, to supplement classroom work or tutoring.

First, the Learning Channel's "GED on TV," a 43 half-hour/nine week series, tutors viewers in reading, writing, math, social studies and test-taking skills in preparation for earning a high school equivalency diploma. The show airs Monday-Friday at 5:30 p.m. (ET) with a same-day repeat show at 10:30 p.m. (ET). To order the set of 4 workbooks ($18 plus $1.45 shipping), call 1-800-354-9067.

Also on TLC, "Encounters: English as a Second Language" offers English instruction, with a strong emphasis on conversational dialogues, to non-English speaking individuals through a 32 half-hour series. The programs are divided into three sections that encourage comprehension, participation and retention. Four workbooks, at $4.95 each, are available to accompany the programs through a toll-free number: 1-800-526-0505. These workbooks follow the actual programs and provide step-by-step review and practice exercises. There are two shows a week that air Monday and Wednesday at 11:30 a.m. (ET) with same-day repeats at 9:00 p.m. (ET), and both shows air again on Friday at 1:00 a.m. (ET) and 1:30 a.m. (ET).

Finally, GED graduates and others preparing for college entrance exams may benefit by watching The Learning Channel's "SAT/ACT College Exam Review Series." Instructors in this series try to answer common questions that students have and demonstrate useful test-taking techniques. Review sessions are divided into three parts, SAT Verbal, SAT Math and ACT Math & English. Approach to problems and problem-solving skills are stressed. Schedule: SAT Verbal is seen the first Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. (ET) and the following Friday at 6:30 p.m. (ET). SAT Math is seen the second Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. (ET) and on the following Friday at 6:30 p.m. (ET). ACT Math and English is seen the third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m. (ET) and the following Friday at 6:30 p.m. (ET).

Anyone interested in receiving TLC schedule information may call 1-800-346-0032 to request a free copy of the TLC program guide.

One-Third of a Nation

The nation must renew its commitment to achieving full, equitable participation of minority citizens in American life, stated a blue-ribbon commission sponsored by the American Council on Education (ACE) and the Education Commission of the States, in a report released in May, 1988.

The commission called on citizens and institutions to eliminate the gaps that mark racial and ethnic minority groups as disadvantaged, and to enable them to enjoy a quality of life as high as that of the white majority.

Created out of educators' concern about low rates of minority enrollment in higher education, the Commission on Minority Participation in Education and American Life said its goal is to "ease the inequities that characterize the lives of minority Americans." Immediate action is needed, the report said, to "make minority citizens more visible physically in every realm—in schools, in colleges and universities, in government, in the work place—and less visible statistically."

The report, entitled "One-Third of a Nation," warns that if we allow the disparities to continue, the nation will suffer a lower standard of living, social conflict will intensify, our ability to compete in world markets will decline, our economy will falter, and our national security will be endangered.

Chaired by Frank H.T. Rhodes, president of Cornell University, with former presidents Gerald R. Ford and Jimmy Carter serving as honorary cochairs, the panel consists of former high-ranking federal official and leaders of business and industry, minority organizations, higher education, and state and local government.

Copies of "One-Third of a Nation" are available for $8 prepaid from the Publications Department, American Council on Education, One Dupont Circle, Washington, DC 20036.

Excerpted from Higher Education & National Affairs, Newsletter of the American Council on Education.

Adult Literacy Updates from the United States Department of Education

Tutor Support Systems

The Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council recently completed a special project which could assist many volunteer literacy efforts. The project, entitled "Tutor Support Systems," rated four approaches to supporting volunteer tutors. The final report gives specific recommendations for administrators of volunteer programs. Matching volunteer tutors with students is only the beginning of a successful literacy program. Support helps ensure retention of tutors and students and helps guarantee that adult learners actually learn the needed skills.

For a copy of "Tutor Support Systems," send $5.00 to Joan Gauthier, Program Director, Greater Pittsburgh Literacy Council, 5920 Kirkwood Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206.

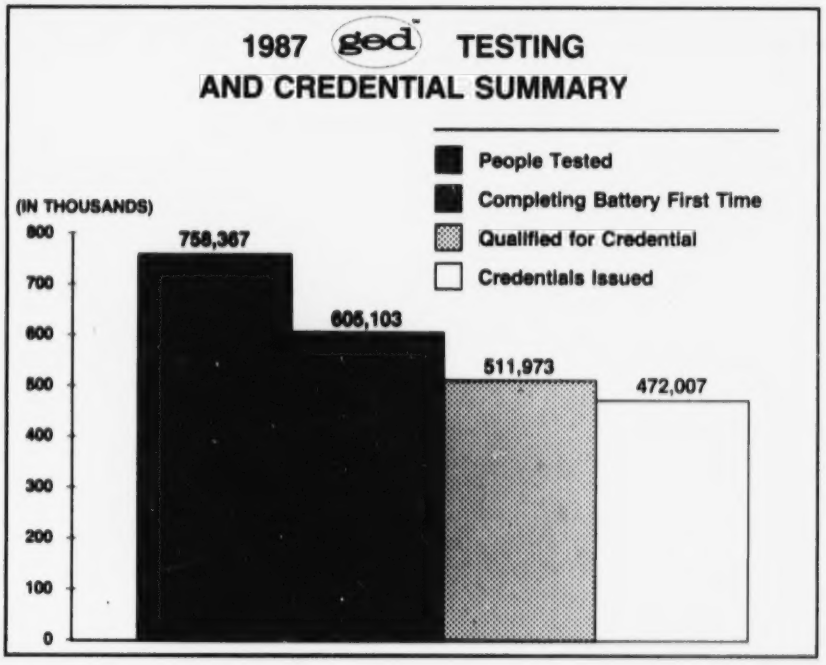
Literacy software "Buyer's Guide" available

A new software "Buyer's Guide" is available through the Adult Literacy & Technology Project. The Guide is the end product of the software evaluation project coordinated by the Adult Basic Skills and Technology Project at Treaty Oaks Community College in The Dalles, Oregon.

The Guide discusses student and teacher evaluations of approximately 100 software programs. It also includes currently available pricings, lists of other existing software evaluations, and lists of needed hardware.

The "Buyer's Guide" costs $15.00; other literacy and technology publications are also available. For further information, contact: Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Penn State University, 248 Calder Way, Room 307, University Park, PA 16801, (814) 863-3777.

Excerpted from The Update, *A Newsletter for the Adult Literacy and* Learning Community, *U.S. Department of Education.*



GED Testing on the Rise

In 1987, the number of persons earning high school equivalency credentials increased for the third consecutive year. The newly published *1987 GED Statistical Report* indicates that 472,007 persons earned GED-based diplomas from the participating states, provinces, and territories last year. This represents an increase of nearly 5% over the number earning credentials in 1986. The Center for Education Statistics estimates that 2,428,000 persons earned diplomas from public high schools in the U.S. last year. If so, the GED program accounted for 15.9% (more than one out of every seven) of the diplomas issued in the United States. More than half of these GED graduates (333,591 of the 1987 graduates) plan to undertake postsecondary education or training.

The number of persons taking the GED Tests at the 3,314 testing locations in the U.S. and Canada also increased last year. In 1987, 758,367 adults completed the tests—an increase of nearly 3% over 1986. Significant increases were achieved in the volume of testing with the special large print and audio editions of the tests (58% and 10% increases respectively). These editions are intended to provide access for adults with disabilities. Increases were also noted for both the English-language (increase of 2.5%) and Spanish-language (increase of 1.8%) programs; participation in the French-language program, however, declined by 14%.

The percent of examinees who earned scores high enough to qualify for the state and province diplomas increased slightly to about 74.1% last year; in contrast, the 1986 passing rate was 72.6%. The 1987 passing rate is the highest reported since 1962. Increases in this rate are probably attributable to improved counseling and advising at local centers and to new publications and staff development programs for adult education teachers.

Recent growth in GED testing appears to be the result of increased marketing and publicity activities as well as tightening job markets in some regions. During the past two years, the largest percentage increases in the number of GED credentials occurred in New Brunswick (with an average annual increase of 27%), Kentucky (25%) and Alberta (21%). Significant increases in the number of GED credentials were also realized in Oklahoma, Prince Edward Island, North Carolina, Vermont, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Utah, and Tennessee. Each of these jurisdictions showed an average annual increase of at least ten percent.

Copies of the report are sent automatically to GED Administrators and Chief Examiners. Others may obtain a copy of the report from Linda Russell at the GED Testing Service for $5.00 prepaid. Copies of most recent annual reports are also available.

Model Program Provides Opportunities for Women

When Holly Guffey of Seneca, South Carolina, read a story about Tri-County Tech's Model Program for Young Women in a newspaper, she felt the article was written just for her.

The article explained the college's multi-purpose program designed for women who have dropped out of high school and who are considering obtaining their GEDs. The three-day training sessions focus on building self-esteem and improving self-confidence in women ages 18 to 25.

Guffey, wife and mother of two, says she quit school at 16 when she was living in Tennessee. "I was pregnant and my father had renal disease. I took him for dialysis four hours a day, three days a week. I never went back to school. It was the biggest mistake of my life. But my father came first," she remembers.

Last July, Holly's father died of kidney disease. "Saying goodbye to him was the hardest thing I've ever done. And I knew I was on my own. I had to pick myself up and do things he wanted for me. He was really disappointed when I quit school and he always wanted me to go back," she said.

Today Guffey is studying day and night to take the GED Tests. "Juggling schedules with children, a husband, and family life is hard," she said. "If it weren't for Tech's day care, I couldn't manage being a wife, mother, and student. It's hard on my kids, too, but they understand. It takes a lot of giving on their part."

According to coordinator Kay Smith, the pre-GED tests are administered in the seminar, along with sessions on counseling, career interest assessment, introduction to the college's JTPA program, and financial aid. After attending the training sessions, women are eligible for assistance with GED training, books, child care, and transportation.

The ultimate goal is for the women to work toward high school completion and improve their basic skills. Transportation to and from the college is also provided for those in need and child care is available at Tech's Child Development Center.

[Persons interested in the Model Program should contact either Nancy Patterson at extension 372 or Kay Smith at extension 180, toll-free in Oconee County, (803) 882-4412.]

Excerpted from REACH Walhalla, *SC, April 1988.*

News and Notes

In Tulsa, Oklahoma, The Intercultural Service Center-YWCA designed and implemented an intercultural GED class, exclusively for foreign-born adults. The program goes beyond traditional ESL and into math, social studies, and science, all taught in English. For more information, contact Sheila Reif, YWCA, 5155 E. 51st, Suite 200, Tulsa, OK 74134-7401, (918) 663-6444.

Recently, Joseph Gastright and Zulfi Ahmad of the Cincinnati, Ohio, Public Schools conducted a study which involved interviewing a large sample of youth who had dropped out of school during three recent years. A few of the questions concerned the GED program. Of those dropouts who were age 18 or older (i.e., old enough to take the GED Tests in Ohio), only 5% had taken the tests and only about half of those passed. In contrast, 27% of the dropouts said they were preparing to take the GED Tests and 83% had considered doing so. If it were true, as some program critics charge, that the availability of GED classes and testing significantly encouraged youth to drop out of school, the first percentage (who had already taken the tests) should have been much higher. The sizable portion of these dropouts who said they were preparing to take the tests, however, does suggest that large numbers of youth who drop out are deciding to resume their education within a few years of leaving school.

By the way, a surprising 22% of the dropouts reported that a teacher, principal, or other school official recommended that they leave school. Also of interest is the fact that 64% of the dropouts reported that someone from their former school had recommended that they continue school in some way (e.g., night school, GED classes, etc.). A unique part of the study involved interviewing students who should have been as likely to drop out, but didn't. One of the differences was that the former group (Stay-Ins) had been retained in one or more elementary grades, whereas the latter (Drop-Outs) had been retained exclusively at a secondary grade. Copies of the report entitled "Dropout Causes and Characteristics: Do Local Findings Confirm National Data?" can be obtained from the authors by writing to the Cincinnati Public Schools, 230 East 9th Street, Cincinnati, OH 45202.

The New York Department of Education is now making available the videotapes and manuals developed to assist the state's GED teachers who prepare for the new essay portion of the GED Tests. The package includes two videotapes ("The Writing Sample" and "Teaching the Writing Process"), an extensive in-service education manual, and a binder. The second tape is also available separately. For prices and additional information on New York State's *Teaching Writing to Adults Project*, contact: Albany Educational TV, 27 Western Avenue, Albany, NY 12203.

Scores *(continued from page 1)*

emphasis on higher level thinking skills in the multiple-choice portions of the tests. In addition, scores on the new tests reflect new norms, based on a spring 1987 administration to U.S. graduating high school seniors.

A study of the performance of nearly 12,000 adult examinees who took the new GED Tests in 20 states between January and June, 1988, has been conducted by the GED Testing Service. Although final results from this study will be reported later in the year, preliminary findings are summarized in Figure 1 which compares, by test, the average standard scores obtained by examinees in 1980 with those obtained in 1988. As the figure shows, the average of the five standard scores on the 1988 GED Tests (47.1) is the same as it was for adults taking the earlier version of the tests in 1980 (47.1). Adults in 1988 are scoring higher on the Science Test and the Social Studies Test (49.7 and 48.9, respectively) than did adults in 1980 (47.9 and 47.4, respectively), about the same on the Interpreting Literature and the Arts Test (48.7) as did adults in 1980 on the Reading Skills Test (49.0) and lower on the new Writing Skills Test and the Mathematics Test (43.8 and 44.5, respectively) than did adults in 1980 (45.5 and 45.7, respectively).

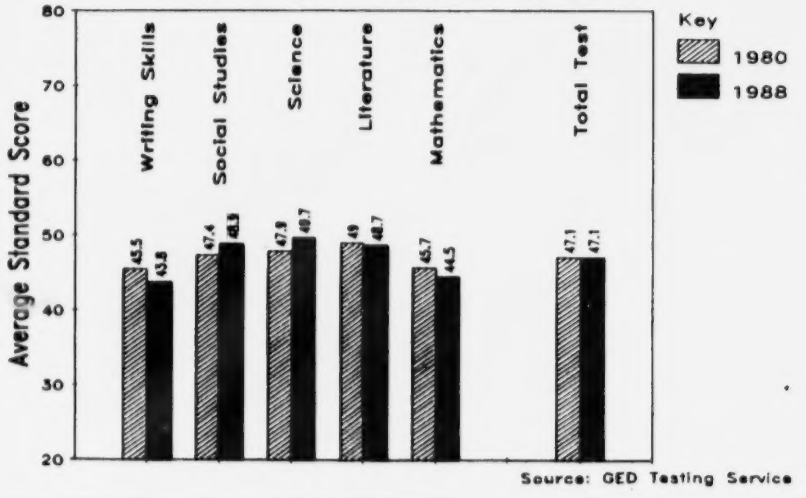
Pass rates for examinees taking the 1988 GED Tests have been estimated for the two most commonly used standards and these 1988 results are compared to pass rates obtained for examinees in 1980. Preliminary results indicate the following percentages of examinees were able to meet these two minimum standard score requirements in 1980 and in 1988:

	1980	*1988*
Min. 35 and Mean 45	62%	55%
Min. 40 and Mean 45	59%	50%

On the basis of these early results, it appears that for these two minimum standards, pass rates may decline between 7 and 9%. This drop is due chiefly to lower scores on both the Writing Skills and Mathematics Tests. However, as examinee preparation improves over time, pass rates are likely to increase slightly.

It is important to note that the 1988 estimates are based on a sample of only 2,000 examinees who completed all five tests in the 1988 GED battery between January and June. Therefore, these results may differ from later results based on a larger, more representative sample.

1980 and 1988 Examinee Performance on the Tests of General Educational Development (GED), by Test



Learning Disabled Students

(continued from page 1)

LD students—diagnosed and undiagnosed—do appear in regular GED classes. Further, their numbers may be significant, depending on the adequacy of the secondary school systems in meeting their academic needs.

Often GED teachers will be the only source of academic remediation that the LD adult will ever turn to. And the good news is, there is much that such teachers can do to ensure success.

Diagnosis

Lists of LD characteristics abound. While the following does not attempt to replace such lists, it presents a brief overview of signs that the classroom teacher would be expected to observe. These symptoms are given as they would present themselves in classroom activities.

General Behaviors

As experienced teachers know, avoidance behaviors may occur in any student, LD and non-LD alike. For both, avoiding may be a way to shrink from challenge; in LD students, it may also demonstrate an awareness of their deficiencies.

For example, the learning disabled student with visual processing problems may be quite willing to take part in class discussions, but will clown, forget his glasses, feign illness, or find other reasons to escape reading out loud in front of his peers.

LD-related deficits may also contribute to apparent misbehavior. The student who has only carried out the first part of important oral instructions may have auditory processing or auditory memory problems; worse, he may have believed that he understood, and that the teacher is "the one with the problem."

Reading

Oral Reading: The student reads with a clear overdependence on guessing words, using the general word configuration. As a consequence, comprehension is compromised. (Guessing based on context, of course, is to be encouraged.) The LD student may also substitute, delete, add, or transpose letters and syllables. Such a reader may also lose his place on a page or within a paragraph.

"Given the relative unavailability and expense of special programs, LD students—diagnosed and undiagnosed—do appear in regular GED classes. Further, their numbers may be significant, depending on the adequacy of the secondary school systems in meeting their academic needs."

Silent Reading: The student may appear to be re-reading or reading very slowly to complete a passage; the student may also have significant errors in answering questions related to text due to overguessing.

These difficulties may be attributable to poor visual processing, compounded by inappropriate training in reading with undue stress on phonics at the expense of reading comprehension.

[Note: The LD student can be singled out from non-LD peers in these respects by relatively high achievement in other areas—including oral discussion and understanding of technical issues.]

Math

Calculation: The student may demonstrate inconsistent mastery of facts and procedures due to problems with long-term memory. For example, he may show understanding of pre- algebra, but not fractions. There may also be difficulty in recalling the sequence of a process. This ability is particularly important in multi-step operations, such as in geometry.

It is not unusual for LD students with strong short-term, but weak long-term memories to have incompletely mastered the multiplication tables and other rote facts—yet show good ability when learning or re-learning procedures. (Use of calculators may be helpful in classroom instruction, if so, even though they are not permitted on the GED Math Test.)

There may also be difficulty in orientation (subtracting may proceed from the wrong direction) and perseveration (after completing several addition problems, the student may continue to add when encountering multiplication or subtraction signs). Signs may also be confused because of problems with angulation: at first glance as a task begins, an addition sign may appear to be a multiplication sign.

Word Problems: The LD student often has a discrepancy between calculation skills and achievement with word problems—in favor of the former. The level of abstraction resulting from the language used and the logic of the wording may need "translation" by the teacher into computational processes before the student can interpret the problem.

Expressive Language

Writing—or managing language in an unstructured format—demands one of the highest levels of skills integration of any classroom task. Therefore, this test requirement can be depended upon to reveal the LD adult's worst deficit—weak visual memory for spelling; poor organization (prioritizing and sequencing of ideas); inconsistent memory for sentence mechanics; and problems with grammar and semantics.

For LD persons, a requirement to develop a 200-word essay in "one fell swoop" is therefore highly anxiety-producing. (For alternatives, see Modifications to Teaching Approaches, which follow.)

"The learning disabled student with visual processing problems may be quite willing to take part in class discussions, but will clown, forget his glasses, feign illness, or find other reasons to escape reading out loud in front of his peers."

LD SYMPTOMS; THE QUICK LIST

There is no "typical" LD student. In fact, all of the symptoms listed below tend to be true of most individuals. The degree to which they are manifested in some persons results in their appearing to be learning disabled. However, those GED adults who show irregular gaps in academic skills, as well as clear discrepancies between skill areas, often suffer from the following deficits:

Poor organization of concepts and tasks, as well as the physical environment, including problems with

- Prioritizing
- Sequencing
- Relating a part to the whole such as relating an isolated idea to a unifying concept
- Grasping similarities between items
- Grouping or categorizing

Memory Difficulties

- Long-term versus short-term memory difficulties (student may retain ideas well from one day to the next, but if information is not continually rehearsed and associated with previously learned material, they will "lose" concepts learned weeks earlier)
- Variable or unpredictable performance (with student losing information in periods of stress or overload, but recalling it again later)

[Note: Attention deficits may be mistaken for memory deficits. Such students have problems in coming to attention and/or sustaining attention.]

Processing Difficulties

- Visual difficulties (for reading from board or text). Such problems may include visual sequencing ("museum" is copied from the blackboard as "musuem"), visual perception ("b" is seen as "d"), and visual memory (spelling, especially of non-phonetic words, is poor).
- Auditory difficulties (with following directions, absorbing all major ideas from lectures and discussions). Included are problems with auditory sequencing ("1984" is heard as "1894"), auditory processing ("Bill of Rights" may be "pillow fights"!), and auditory memory (a complete thought heard in a lecture cannot be retained long enough to put into notes). Also, note-taking may prove difficult when a student cannot do two things (listen and write) at the same time.
- Perceptual-Motor difficulties (for tasks combining visual or auditory skills with writing, and sometimes memory as well). Problems seen include poor letter formation, poor spatial orientation, and deterioration of written expressive language skills. Both copying and composition skills may be affected.

Difficulties with Other Psychological Processes

- Rigidity: The student may be reluctant to change class routine, use new approaches, resist having a substitute teacher or challenge opinions from others without a logical foundation (or earlier preparation for the change).
- Impulsivity: The student may speak or act before thinking.
- Concreteness: The student may have difficulty managing abstract ideas or need to relate concepts to personal or immediate experience.
- Perseveration: The student may feel compelled to stay on a task or use a procedure past the point of its being appropriate. (Such a student, for example, may continue to fill out a worksheet after a teacher has called "time," seemingly unaware of the need to stop or may dwell on a point excessively in discussion.)
- Distractibility: The student may not be able to maintain focus or may be distracted by small noises and minor activity, or by visual clutter in the environment.

Addressing LD Deficits in the Classroom

For the LD adult with significant deficits, long-term remediation (ideally through skilled tutoring) is always a worthwhile pursuit. Unfortunately, such help is often not practical from the student's point of view. With the assumption, then, that the GED teacher may be the individual's last link with formal education, the following sections propose teaching ideas useful at the classroom level. These suggestions have been proven effective for teaching learning and test-taking skills to non-LD students as well.

"The LD student can be singled out from non-LD peers in these respects by relatively high achievement in other areas—including oral discussion and understanding of technical issues."

A Note on Metacognitive Strategies

One of the chief advantages of working with any ABE student is the adult status itself: This allows both teacher and student not only to share common experiences, but to come to a mutual understanding about learning styles.

First, open discussion of learning differences can serve as a happy eye- opener for LD students. Their metacognition—or awareness of their own thinking processes—is often underdeveloped. It may be too painful to examine their mistakes closely, or they may be unable to independently step back to look at their own performance without assistance.

Informal discussion (or informal testing procedures) will help these students discover whether they learn best by seeing (visual learning), by hearing/talking (auditory learning), or by doing/ touching (kinesthetic learning). Teachers can guide the realization that there is no "ideal" learning style. And by role modeling and discussion, the teacher can show that every adult has learning deficits that can, to a great extent, be compensated.

Students also need to know that specific learning enhancements, such as the ones described below for use by the teacher, can often be consciously adopted by the student to meet their personal learning needs, in and out of the classroom.

Test-Taking and Teaching Competencies

The stress of test-taking is often particularly troublesome to LD individuals because their long-term memory—already undependable—may fall by the wayside. Still others with impulsivity problems or a concrete approach to tasks may never have discovered the principles of reasoned guessing in multiple choice tests. Without the benefit of diagnosis, it remains for the instructor to verify that all students have mastered test-taking skills and strategies.

Stress Reduction

Students should know that proper diet and sleep before testing enhances performance; that "cramming" up until the last minute is overstimulation, creating information overload that cannot be accessed easily. On the other hand, slow, quiet breathing before and during the tests aids relaxation.

Stress is often reduced when students sign up with or sit near people they know. They will also be more comfortable, of course, if the following testing formats are thoroughly familiar: instructions; multiple choice for right answers; multiple choice for locating errors; expressive writing.

It is not unusual for test-induced anxiety to aggravate the student's disorganization, so that testing tools are misplaced or lost (e.g., pencils, test booklet, answer sheet, scratch paper, etc.). A cycle of escalating stress then ensues. Habit formation for the regular placement of materials, then, should be taught to disorganized individuals.

Scratch paper can be used for visual tracking—the student slips it down the reading, line by line—when text becomes lengthy. It can also come in handy for blocking irrelevant and distracting material.

Students should also be reminded to leave time blocks for self-correction, and to fill in every item; GED does not penalize guessing.

Finally, teachers need to bear in mind that the procedure that seems perfectly obvious to the non-LD adult may need to be directly taught to the concrete LD learners. Do they pencil in ovals so that they are machine readable? Are erasures complete? Has the student made sure that end numbers for test sections and test booklets match? Brief, direct teaching may help avoid potential disaster.

Modifications of Teaching Approaches

Verification of Learning

Like many failure-prone students, LD students often adopt a posture of "learned passivity," rarely volunteering information or admitting (or even *realizing*) confusion. Teachers must thus work harder to ensure that ideas are understood, retained, and accessible even under the duress of testing. Teachers can do immediate verification of student preparedness by means of the following:

- Teacher-initiated questions to individual students
- Mutual student-to-student questioning, facilitated by the teacher
- Frequent reviews and "over-learning" to enhance long-term memory
- Teaching incrementally, which leads students from the concrete to the more abstract (e.g., personal vendettas vs. national concerns vs. international issues, etc.)

Active Student Learning

Students known or suspected to be LD need classroom experiences clearly different from those of the past that allowed them to fail. Past teachers' implicit acceptance of the LD student's passive tendencies may even have contributed to the failure.

"Students should know that proper diet and sleep before testing enhances performance; that 'cramming' up until the last minute is overstimulation, creating information overload that cannot be accessed easily."

Encouraging these students to take responsibility for learning is a start. Then, too, they need to know that this approach is a specific technique for enhancing learning, rather than a potentially threatening "teacher's quirk" (see "A Note on Metacognition").

The following are among those activities that encourage responsibility for learning:

- Student-student Q&A, both verbal and written (For example, one student may be assigned a special reading, and the second must question the first student on it. An appropriate list of

questions can be developed by either the teacher or the student.)

- Peer teaching, one-on-one (for example, a student with a good biology background could teach a classification system to a classroom peer)
- Student creation of an oral presentation of hands-on projects (for example, maps, models, etc.)
- Student speeches—to explain an experience related to GED learning or to express an opinion on a topic of general interest (student volunteering is recommended, to avoid "speech anxiety")
- Panel discussion (teacher-directed) on a topic of interest (for example, each student might express a different Latin American country's position on its relations with the United States)
- Opportunities for self-correction and self-evaluation of written work by students
- Opportunities for student reviews of other students' work (for example, examining compositions for accuracy on one criteria, such as punctuation) Here, using ID numbers on papers, rather than names, will help avoid self-consciousness.
- Group games and competitions (for example, to see if women/men, first row/next row are first to list certain events in a correct sequence or to complete a chart)
- Skits and role playing (using subjects from history, psychology, literature, sociology)
- Opportunities for students to help plan certain aspects of the curriculum (for example, sequencing of activities for the night with relative weight given to certain topics)
- Class "brainstorming" after a unit is completed about what did and didn't facilitate learning

Multisensory Activities

The weaker processing modes—whether visual, auditory, or motor/kinesthetic—may be strengthened in activities that combine all three. Although many such activities are traditionally seen as the proper jurisdiction of pre-school or elementary school, adults accept them, given reasonable explanations of their learning value.

Multisensory activities are also useful for relieving the monotony of routine. They include:

- Non-discourse writing, kinesthetic/tactile tasks (copying, charting, graphing, tracing, drawing, creating models)
- Sorting and matching by the individual (terms and definitions; items and their categories; events and dates; etc.)
- Silent reading by the class while one or more individuals read same text aloud (silent readers will be more active learners if they are alerted in advance about questions the teacher will ask about the reading)
- Whole-body movement accompanying responses (students stand to answer questions; students move to arrange themselves in small discussion groups)
- Class gives choral response to teacher prompt (useful for well-taught short answers, sequenced material)
- Group competitions (again, see above) involving manipulation of materials (matching cards in "Concentration" games; sequencing cards; moving parts of models)

Language Development

LD individuals may also fail to meet test expectations because language used in the classroom may be altered slightly in the exam situation. Concreteness, rigidity, and vocabulary deficits may keep them from making the appropriate connections.

Language difficulties, as previously discussed, also impact profoundly on expressive writing abilities. The following will prove helpful:

- Key vocabulary should be extracted from texts and taught or reviewed and related to the text before the learner is asked to read new material.
- Students can develop better sentence and paragraph sense by regularly writing summaries and short answers as class assignments.
- Teachers should "zero in" on use of cue words ("however," "but," "therefore," etc.) signalling direction of meaning in readings.
- Free writing and brainstorming should be encouraged as prerequisites to structuring ideas in formal compositions.
- To minimize the stress often associated with expressive writing, the teacher should initially emphasize that sentence mechanics are *secondary* to the flow of ideas— and that all students have a lifetime of good experiences from which ideas can emanate.

The above represents suggestions only for the test-taking aspects and content areas of the GED Tests. Organizational strategies, as well as physical testing accommodations for the learning disabled, will be addressed in a future issue of GED Items.

This section of GED *Items* was facilitated by the staff of the HEATH Resource Center, another program of the American Council on Education. HEATH is an acronym for Higher Education and Adult Training for people with Handicaps and is the national clearinghouse on postsecondary education and disability issues. HEATH publishes a Resource Directory for LD Adults as well as a variety of other materials about education after high school for people with disabilities. For a publications list or specific inquiries, contact HEATH Resource Center, One Dupont Circle, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20036-1193, (202)939-9320 or (800)544-3284 from outside the Washington metropolitan area.

Non-Standard Testing Procedures for the Physically Disabled

by Paula Silver, Director of Inglis House, Philadelphia, PA

First of all, in testing the *severely* physically disabled adult, it is important not to do for the examinee what he is capable of doing for himself. With this in mind, examine the alternatives and provide a structure for the least restrictive situation. For example, an individual may be able—with great effort—to darken ovals and thus record his own answers. Though the process may seem painstakingly long and labored, the examinee should have the option of untimed testing in that manner.

Or an individual may not possess the coordination to darken small ovals, but can circle them or make a similarly identifiable mark. Later, the answers can be transferred to a standard answer sheet for the examinee to check over. This will reassure him of accuracy and include him in every phase of the testing experience.

In the instance where the examinee cannot write or elects not to write because it is too physically exhausting, answers need to be recorded by the examiner. The examinee should say his answer aloud and the examiner should repeat it before recording it. In a quiet and unhurried atmosphere, this process will flow easily for both the examiner and the examinee.

An individual who cannot write and has no intelligible speech, however, requires some type of communication device in order to complete the tests. Most persons without speech will have a communication board (either manual or electronic) that they rely on to express their thoughts. This kind of board may have the names of important people, places, and key ideas as well as words like "yes," "no," "maybe," and "repeat." The alphabet is also written so that words and thoughts may be spelled. Several of these electronic communication devices are available, with prices varying from under $100 (e.g., Texas Instruments' Speak-N-Spell) to more than $2500 for customized boards with printing capabilities. A regional testing center may even wish to purchase a communication device to have available for examinees who need one. The portable device, Vocaid, from Texas Instruments may be worth considering.

Another aid for testing multiply disabled persons is a typewriter, preferably electric. An examinee who cannot type by hand may be able to use a mouthstick or headpointer. Or physical and occupational therapists may suggest other alternatives for adaptive devices.

Examinees who cannot write still benefit greatly from being able to see their thoughts in print as they express them. This is easily accomplished when the examinee and examiner work side by side. However, examinees confined to reclining wheelchairs, for example, could benefit from the use of an overhead projector to view their essays as they compose or revise them.

The GED Testing Service has relieved the burden of pressure by waiving the time requirement for severely physically disabled GED examinees. A comfortable environment, a quiet location, communication devices, and adaptive tools are all important, but the most vital element, is *patience*. The testing process is a unique and challenging experience for both the examiner and the disabled examinee. Approaching it with both professional skill and compassion makes it equally rewarding.

Examiners may also find it helpful to make available these test-taking tips for students who are physically disabled:

- Select your best time of day to work.
- Be physically rested. Avoid any drastic changes near testing time, in diet or medication, that may affect your functioning, abilities, or test performance.
- Don't hesitate to suggest ways to make the testing environment more comfortable—e.g., climate control, lighting, table height. Don't feel pressured; you are taking the test untimed in an approved situation. Work at the pace natural to you.
- Conserve your energies. Spend reasonable time per question.
- Feel positive, think positive. You are taking the exam after careful preparation, the results will reflect that. Good luck!

For GED Examiners

Inventory of Materials

Question: Why do your policies require that Chief Examiners inventory materials so frequently?

GED Examiners are asked to inventory testing materials when they are received at the beginning of the contract year, before and after each test session, and *monthly* even if the tests have not been administered that month—a big job.

We and you have to keep such close track of testing materials to assure that the Tests are not compromised. Obviously, if a candidate has access in advance to a test he or she will take, the test results will not indicate that examinee's true ability.

Inventorying your GED materials immediately upon receipt will assure that you received everything you ordered and that no materials are defective. If a problem with your order is discovered, GEDTS can forward replacement or missing materials.

On the other hand, if you have not inventoried your shipment on receipt, and you later discover test booklets missing, it will be very difficult to determine whether a loss or packing error has occurred.

You need to inventory frequently so that any compromise can be detected as soon as possible. For example, suppose that the inventory prior to a test session indicated no irregularities but in the inventory immediately after testing, you discover a page missing from one test booklet. Your quick discovery of the problem will enable you to track the cause of the loss.

Maintenance of a test log (see *GED Examiner's Manual* Appendix 15) will also assist you in determining the source. Remember too that the quick way to check for missing pages is to fan out the pages of the test booklet and look for the row of black squares—a missing square indicates a missing page.

Occasionally GED materials are accidentally destroyed. If you follow the inventory procedures and can determine that everything was in order after testing, you would not then suspect an examinee unjustly.

A call for expertise: David Nudo from Harrisburg, Illinois, wants to know how examiners manage the different time limits among the tests. For example, if they are administering math and social studies at the same time, how do they keep track of different examinees' time limits? And how do they schedule breaks—since examinees cannot take a break in the middle of a test? Please send comments to Jean Lowe at GEDTS!

Deterrents to Participation:

An Adult Education Dilemma

In a recent monograph, educator Craig Scanlon reviews the current body of knowledge on deterrents to participation in adult education. In this context, such deterrents are defined as reasons contributing to an adult's decision not to engage in learning activities.

Current theories imply that many variables are associated with participation in adult education. The literature reviewed in this monograph describes the effect on participation of such demographic variables as age, sex, income, race, educational attainment, employment status, and geographic location. Other nondemographic variables include career and social roles; values, attitudes, beliefs, or opinions; and individual psychological or personality traits.

However, research shows that demographic and nondemographic variables by themselves are not deterrents to participation. The monograph concludes, among other things, that these variables are influenced by the prospective learners' *perceptions* of their perceived magnitude.

Eight categories of deterrence factors are outlined in this monograph:

- Individual, family or home-related problems
- Cost concerns
- Questionable worth, relevance, or quality of educational opportunities
- Negative educational perceptions, including prior unfavorable experiences
- Apathy or lack of motivation
- Lack of self-confidence
- A general tendency toward nonaffiliation
- Incompatibilities of time and/or place

The last chapter of Scanlon's work addresses strategies to overcome these deterrents. First, general guidelines are derived from the work of Cross (1981), who applied concepts underlying participation theory; and Beder (1980), who developed a marketing approach to adult education programming. Finally, specific examples are provided of successful approaches to stimulating participation—particularly among reentry women, the elderly, the educationally disadvantaged, and rural adults.

From ERIC Series No. 308. To order a copy, write to ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, National Center for Research in Vocational Education, Box E, The Ohio State University, 1960 Kenny Road, Columbus, OH 43210, or call (800) 848-4815, or [in Ohio, Alaska, and Hawaii], (614) 486-3655.

CUNY'S Adult Book Updated

We've just received the latest edition of The City University of New York's (CUNY) booklet entitled *For the Change of a Lifetime: Opportunities for Adults*. (Our September/October 1987 issue had first brought this booklet, describing CUNY's postsecondary programs, to your attention.)

The booklet cites twelve colleges that offer adult degree programs. These programs are structured to meet the special needs of adult students and most of the colleges have child care centers. Seven options throughout the CUNY system provide flexible programs and schedules, including degree programs for the homebound at Queensborough Community College and Queens College. Active efforts to prepare adults for the GED Tests and provide accessible testing centers are also marks of the University's commitment to its motto of "access to excellence."

The new version of this booklet updates the information on CUNY's programs for adults. For example, CUNY has added another tuition-free GED program to its list of programs preparing adults for the GED Tests. The number of adult degree programs on its various campuses has also been augmented. A new set of profiles of successful adult students at CUNY institutions complements the program descriptions.

If you'd like to see how a college or university goes about creating suitable programs for adults or would like to get ideas for programs at your own school, write for a free copy of the 24-page book to: Patricia G. Reilly, Director of Development and Corporate Relations, Office of Admission Services, CUNY, 101 West 31st Street, New York, NY 10001.

GED Study at Casper College, Wyoming

According to a 1986 study report of GED graduates enrolled at Casper College in Casper, Wyoming, freshmen who were GED certificate holders performed as well as the average freshmen in that college. On the basis of this study, Casper College has instituted a program to award eight full-year tuition waiver scholarships each fall to GED graduates who meet specified criteria. Copies of the full report may be obtained from Richard R. Means, Director of Testing, Student Personnel Services, Casper College, Casper, Wyoming 82601.

1,000,000 GED Information Brochures

GEDTS has now filled orders for one million new English and Spanish GED information brochures. These free brochures describe the 1988 Revised GED Tests. Because the demand has been overwhelming, we have not been able to send out all the orders promptly and we apologize for this inconvenience. While we will continue to ship the brochures, we cannot always fill large orders. If you need information brochures, send a self-addressed mailing label and an order letter to Linda Russell, GEDTS.

GED Items: Get your own subscription!

GED Items may be ordered the following ways:

- Single free copy to each GED Examiner, State Director of Adult Education or GED Administrator, and Director of a local GED instructional center.
- Bulk subscriptions (Fees are $15 for 15 copies of each issue; $20 for 25 copies; $30 for 50 copies; and $50 for 100 copies).
- Individual subscriptions (You must send a check or money order for $6 to receive these; we will not invoice you for this amount and we don't accept credit cards!)

To arrange for bulk or individual subscriptions, contact:

Circulation Manager (GED Items)
GED Testing Service, One Dupont Circle NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Preparing for Test 4: Interpreting Literature and the Arts

by Susan Robinson, GED Literature Editor

The enjoyment of a good movie, a piece of music, a painting, even a favorite meal, can be heightened by our understanding of *how* it is crafted. (This explains in part the popularity of "behind the scenes" looks at the making of movies.) So, too, a student's appreciation of literature.

In this month's column, we consider how students can prepare for Test 4, Interpreting Literature and the Arts: first by *reading* and then by *examining* the component parts of what they read. This latter is the "how" or "behind the scenes" look into literature.

Reading Literature

From the outset, students who are disinterested readers will need to make a *habit* of reading. Encourage your students to read the newspaper daily, to buy their favorite magazines, to get a library card—and to use it! In fact, a class trip to the library to apply for cards and tour some "interesting" sections may well be worth the sacrifice of class time. Certainly, the library sections on sports, how-to books, fashion, and paperback fiction will have a broad appeal. A reference librarian can help you and indicate areas pertinent to the other four GED Tests as well.

Libraries may also have a high school reading section where many of the "classics" can be found (e.g. works by Faulkner, Hemingway, Steinbeck, Twain, etc.). Since 25% of Test 4 is based on the works of classical or *enduring* authors, students should consider reading these works for both content and difficulty. You may even wish to build your own library in the classroom. (Or if you're a home tutor, consider running a "bookmobile" out of the trunk of your car!) You can also create another reading source by clipping short stories and interesting articles from old magazines and filing them by subject. Then students can browse through your files until something catches their attention. (Borrowing from the teacher can also be its own incentive to read.) Of course, the main idea through all the clipping and collecting, the lending and the touring, is to whet the appetite of your students. Have them read, read, read—then have them read some more.

Examining Literature

As you are urging your students to read, you can also begin to discuss the different genres. Even the poorest readers will realize that the verse on a greeting card differs from an article on the Super Bowl, which differs from a romance novel, a movie review, or the school play for which their child is memorizing lines. These examples are simple ones, but they can be used to demonstrate the broader categories of Popular and Classical Literature and Commentary *about* the Arts. Such examples also help students understand the genres of poetry, prose non-fiction, fiction, commentary about the arts, and drama.

Fiction is probably the most enjoyable literature for weak readers to study first. You may wish to have your students read a short story from a high school anthology and then begin to ask some questions:

What happens in this story? (plot)

Who are the main characters? What are they like? How do we know? (characterization)

When and *where* does this story occur? (setting)

These are the simplest questions with which to focus your students. Then you can begin to examine the writer's craft or *how* the story is written.

Start with the story's conflict. You may wish to explain that most conflicts in literature (and life!) can be broken down to:

Man vs. Man (in the sense of "*human*kind"!)

Man vs. Nature

Man vs. God

Man vs. Himself

Man vs. Society

Ask your students what the conflicts are in the story. Is there a resolution? How do we know?

With each of the preceding questions, of course, you have asked questions at the level of *comprehension*. Whether a story states literally where it takes place or whether a student must infer the setting from clues such as weather or street names, so far you are asking students only to *understand* what they are reading.

Next you will wish to bring them along to higher levels of thinking, such as *application* and *analysis*. The best place to start with application questions is by looking at characterization. Take the principal character and talk about his or her behavior in the story. What are the most obvious characteristics of this character? (Is she brave? Is he jealous? Does she makes excuses? Is he always willing to help another?)

Now create another situation which this same character might encounter. Given what we know from the story, how would this character likely respond to a similar conflict or experience? As you can see, the purpose of this exercise will be to extract a principle or characteristic in one setting and apply it to another.

At the level of *analysis* in Test 4, the examinee will need to consider how language works to create certain impressions. For example, short, clipped sentences can create a comic effect, while long, intricate ones are more serious or even romantic. Word choice too is essential to an author's craft. "John stumbled into the room" is quite different from "John sauntered into the room," and so on. A word or phrase can also alter a story's mood. The word "suddenly," for example, primes us for a dramatic change. Or a sentence such as "The sky grew dark" is ominous in tone and builds a feeling of suspense. Look for key words relating to setting or character with your students and examine their effect on a passage. To use the examples above, you may wish to have students substitute their own words: e.g., instead of "suddenly," try "slowly." How does this change the reader's perception of what is about to occur? Exercises like this are more than speculation, for they invite the reader to be sensitive to the enormous power of word choice.

Finally, choose literature that you yourself enjoy. Nothing is so contagious as the enthusiasm of a teacher sharing a favorite work. And in that sharing, teachers will find themselves renewed. Happy reading.

(Other teaching ideas for Test 4 are found in *The Official Guide to the GED Tests*, Contemporary Books, Inc.)

Use of the Spanish GED in Texas: Where Do We Go From Here?

By Wayne J. Pate, member of the GED Advisory Committee

In 1980, the Census found that approximately 27% of all Texans were Hispanic. Since that time, the Hispanic population has increased considerably through high immigration rates and generally higher birthrates. The importance of addressing the educational needs of this population is of course apparent. And yet, a 1985 GEDTS study, "Adult Education in Texas," indicates that approximately one million Hispanic adults in Texas are not being served by GED and Adult Education programs primarily because of limited English proficiency. The Texas Study also suggests that stronger efforts to publicize the Spanish GED Tests could greatly increase its use.

Unfortunately, many Hispanic arrivals with professional degrees or licenses from their home country are deeply affected by not knowing that the Spanish GED even *exists*. Often these persons cannot get their licenses or certificates validated to practice in the U.S. until they have a GED diploma. In fact, the absence of a GED often makes such individuals become wards of the state during the 1-3 year period it usually takes to become proficient in English. An irony of their situation is that many could function immediately as professional and tax-paying citizens, since they often live and work among Spanish speakers. Quite often, nurses and medical technicians are among those most affected.

What can be done to increase the use of the Spanish GED in Texas? A total of only 1,193 Spanish GED Tests administered in 1987 illustrates the extent to which that version is underutilized. Obviously, a comprehensive effort is needed to change the current practice of many Adult Education and GED testing centers.

Possibly the most thorough effort to promote the Spanish GED has been undertaken by El Centro College of Dallas. Under the leadership of President Wright Lassiter and Testing Center Director Velma Hargis, El Centro has developed an ongoing process that could serve as a model for similar promotion efforts. In fact, TEA's Adult and Community Education Program Development Division is considering incorporating the major elements of El Centro's process into a statewide model for expanding use of the Spanish GED. The following is a brief description of how the process has evolved.

Initially, El Centro formed a President's Hispanic Advisory Council, comprised of Hispanic community and business leaders and El Centro staff. Then a subgroup of this council, the Taskforce on Intervention for Dropouts, the Undereducated and the Unemployed, was formed. This taskforce meets eight times a year to coordinate efforts with business leaders and to brainstorm about outreach. Some products of these meetings have included GED flyers in Spanish targeted at neighborhood grocery stores; an English/Spanish brochure; and the posting of key phrases on Dallas city buses, aimed specifically at the family-related interests of Hispanics. "You and your family benefit from the GED" and "Read your child a story—get a GED" are two such phrases.

Other elements of the outreach effort are also crucial. For example, Hispanic media persons on the taskforce allow access to Spanish television, radio, newspapers, and tabloids. Hiring of bilingual and receptive staff persons is also important. And allowing Hispanic leaders and Adult Education groups to tour the Testing Center reduces the anxiety of test takers.

In considering the components of this successful program, Testing Center Director, Velma Hargis, considers the following elements essential: support from the very top; follow-up in providing ESL and Spanish GED prep classes; commitment of all staff members; and constant outreach and communication with the community.

Although none of the facets of this effort are revolutionary or new, the anticipated effects are dramatic. The El Centro program fully expects to singlehandedly increase statewide administration of the Spanish GED in the coming year by 40%!

El Centro's effort is indicative of the impact that consistent outreach and follow-up can have. If readers have similar success stories or concerns related to Spanish GED testing, please contact Wayne Pate at (512)463-9447, or Room #5-111, Texas Education Agency, 1701 North Congress, Austin, TX 78701.

Reflections

(continued from page 16)

as they read essays written by GED examinees.

Teachers, on the other hand, can emphasize purpose and structure and not inhibit students' self-expression by harping on mechanics. Instruction in sentence, paragraph and, finally, essay structure can teach students the main points of expository writing.

To revise and proofread, students can then read their own papers out loud. They will hear the problems. They can ask themselves: (1) Does each sentence sound complete? (2) Do the thoughts follow one another logically? (3) Is there a beginning and an end? (4) Is there an overall plan? (5) Is my writing convincing?

The vision of the GED essay is operative. Students and teachers are adjusting to the innovation. Although some students are still intimidated, others are seizing the opportunity to develop a new skill and are feeling the excitement of finding their own voices. Writing is an experience of integration. The massiveness of the GED essay project is supported by the underlying unity of our belief that writing is vital for the survival of the species and an intrinsically noble expression of humanity.

GED *Items* is published bi-monthly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education. This newsletter is not copyrighted and readers are invited to copy any part of the newsletter that has not been previously copyrighted. Credit should be given in accordance with accepted publishing standards. *Editor:* Susan Robinson. *Associate Editors:* Richard Metcalf and Douglas Whitney. *Contributing Editors:* Jean Lowe and Wayne Patience. *Contributors:* Janet Baldwin and Wayne Pate. *Production and Circulation Manager:* Linda Russell. (Judith S. Eaton, Board Chair, ACE; Robert H. Atwell, President, ACE)

Coming in the Next Issue of *Items:*

- **Report on 1988 Conference of GED Administrators**
- **"Celebrity" Success Story**
- **Analysis of Examinee Performance on 1988 GED Tests**

and more . . .

Criminal Justice Update

Consider this: It is estimated that 60 to 80 percent of all criminal offenders nationally lack basic skills, two-thirds have not completed high school, and a quarter have not finished elementary school. These figures are an indication of the connection between crime and the lack of basic skills.

With such sobering statistics in mind, decisive action is being taken in the Philadelphia court system to assist offenders in gaining the basic skills that they need to find work and leave crime behind. In January, Common Pleas Court President, Judge Edward J. Bradley, wrote an important letter to his fellow judges stating that they "may now direct as a condition of probation, parole or incarceration" that defendants participate in a specially-designed basic skills program. The literacy training specified by the judge is coordinated by the Mayor's Commission on Literacy. Judge Bradley informed his colleagues that the program provides training to probationers and parolees and is housed in the offices of Court Volunteer Services and in various other city centers. He went on to state that there are approximately 500 centers in operation, with flexible scheduling possible for both testing and training.

"This worthwhile endeavor is aimed at improving an individual's educational skills prior to leaving the criminal justice system, thereby increasing employment opportunities and decreasing recidivism and welfare dependency," said the judge. "The program has already received acclaim and I urge all judges to consider it for appropriate defendants." Judge Bradley also noted that a number of his colleagues have already been requiring defendants to participate in the literacy program. For further information, contact Marcus Williams at the Mayor's Commission on Literacy (Philadelphia) at (215) 686-8652.

Excerpted from *READ ON*, A Newsletter of the Mayor's Commission on Literacy in Philadelphia.

Ask the Experts

. . .That's You!

Promoting Your Program

There are a lot of good ideas out there for promoting GED programs and recruiting students. For example, several jurisdictions have developed video tapes. In the Yukon, Hazel Fekete has a three-minute tape that can repeat itself after a brief interval, which is used at job fairs and public events. North Carolina's 30-minute tape of a GED graduation intersperses segments about specific students between scenes of the graduation.

Several of you have also told us that graduations are an inspiration to potential GED students as well as a way to inform the public about your activities. Rhode Island has an hour video of their statewide graduation, which involves civic leaders as well as graduates and their families. In the District of Columbia, a cap and gown is provided for each participant, making the evening truly memorable.

Marcia Newman, editor of *Catalyst*, the Arizona adult education newsletter, sent us a long list of recruitment-retention ideas. (We like their emphasis on keeping students who walk through the door!)

Among their suggestions—Connect with local state and national job service offices to distribute fliers and to refer students to adult education; insert notices with already established wide circulations (bank statements, paychecks, utility bills, and so on); advertise on cocktail napkins or matchbooks at taverns; make announcements at school sports events. *Catalyst* reports that marketing experts say that a person needs to hear a message more than once before responding to it: you should aim to reach any one person at least seven times in 18 months.

Fairfax County, Virginia, holds monthly Practice Test sessions at which anyone can see how he or she would perform on the GED Tests and receive educational counseling on the spot. They caution that it is important for teachers to be familiar with all the programs offered by the schools—vocational as well as GED.

We'd be happy to share any other good ideas that you have in our next issue!

Kids and Prison Moms Share Reading Time

Every Monday morning for eight weeks last summer, a retired librarian went to prison. She went to read stories to incarcerated mothers and their visiting children.

The story telling time takes place at the Children's Center of the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York and is a project of the Office of Special Services of the Westchester Library System. The program is one way the library system can target a specific group and encourage literacy in a population where an estimated 50 percent of American prisoners are illiterate.

Another program, developed in the prison by inmate Precious Bedell, also promotes reading. "Parents as Reading Partners" encourages parents to spend 15 minutes a day either reading to their children, listening to their children read, or both. It is also conducted in about 800 schools in New York State.

"I've been the storyteller here," said Ms. Bedell, "and I noticed that a lot of children hadn't been read to and didn't like reading. And reading with a child gives closeness and intimacy—it is shared time."

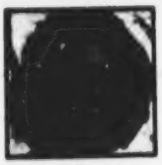
The mother of one seven-year-old avid reader said, "When I was younger I wasn't into books. But I encouraged my children and always bought them books. I read more when I got older. They would see me reading and then they would want to read, too."

In yet another program at Bedford Hills last year, a small group of pregnant inmates participated in Mothers, Infants and Literacy Knowledge (MILK). The program involved reading before and after the birth of their child to establish a pattern of reading.

The reading programs at Bedford Hills seem to be working, removing inmates who participate, at least for a while, from what one inmate calls "the usual chaos of their lives."

Excerpted from The Written Word, *Spring 1988 (Source:* The New York Times).

Reflections on the State of the Essay



by Ann Devlin-Low, Adult Educator

As a GED Writing Advisory Committee member, Chief Reader, and GED English teacher, I have been working with the GED essay from three different perspectives. To begin with, I have participated in essay topic selection and criticism, evaluation and refinement of the scoring guide, Chief Reader training, and teaching of the essay in the GED classroom. I have also read and scored thousands of essays from an across-the-nation sampling.

And through these experiences, I continue to be struck by the vision of the GED Advisory Committee that insisted upon the inclusion of an essay in the Writing Skills Test, the willingness of Chief Readers and readers to learn the scoring system and make it work, and the creativity of GED English teachers who are challenging students to express themselves in writing. I am also impressed and moved by the authentic voices in so many of the student essays.

Life has already been a hard teacher for most of our GED students; their feelings are intense and often undelineated. As writing instructors we can urge them to express their opinions. We can show them how to back up their ideas with strong supportive evidence from their own lives. We can also point out that they already have the raw material for writing, and we can assure them that we will teach them the craft.

First, to produce coherent and convincing writing, our students need to understand structure. To teach recognition of structure, I give my students sets of scored sample essays representing the six point range of our scoring system. Their task is to rank the papers from best to worst-organized. We then discuss the organizational features in these papers and list them on the board. Although students do need help articulating their observations, most do very well with the ranking; we all have an inherent ability to recognize order versus chaos. Student readers even grumble about the confusion of the lower score point papers; they find it disturbing. I collect the writing samples and ask my students to write their own essays on the same topic using the organization pointers on our list.

Another simple methodology for introducing structure in essay writing is to take the group through the entire process. Moving through topic analysis, brainstorming, listing of ideas, and ordering of ideas, we write a group essay. The finished product tends to be formulaic but serves as a firm foundation for beginning writers.

Only after giving GED students a minimum of two concrete demonstrations of writing structure do I ask them to write an essay without any warm-up. As students develop some specific writing skills, their writing becomes more convincing and they themselves become more convinced; solid writing confirms self-esteem which empowers students to write better and better.

If our students have something to say and can organize their papers, they are already two-thirds of the way to competent expository writing for the GED exam. GED essay scorers are trained to look for purpose, structure, and control of the conventions of Standard Written English. Each of these components carries equal weight in the scoring process. Commas and caps are not the measuring rods. Overall effectiveness, the total picture, determines the scorepoint.

Teachers and readers must not forget for a minute that GED essay scoring is done holistically. Students also need to know how their writing will be evaluated; they feel more relaxed about the essay part of the test when they know they will not be marked down for every careless mechanics error. The essay scoring guide states that the three-score-point paper "often demonstrates repeated weaknesses in the conventions of Standard Written English" and even the top-of-the-line six paper "may contain an occasional flaw in the conventions of Standard Written English." So perfectionist teachers and readers beware! In forty-five minutes we are not asking GED candidates to write a polished final draft.

Readers can expect first draft quality papers possibly with some revision, hopefully proofread. To deepen reader awareness of the examinee's situation, all Chief Readers and readers must write an on-the-spot essay themselves (in forty-five minutes) as part of their training. Even these accomplished communicators find that immediate writing in a narrow time frame is not only difficult but also threatening. They are less inclined, then, to dissect

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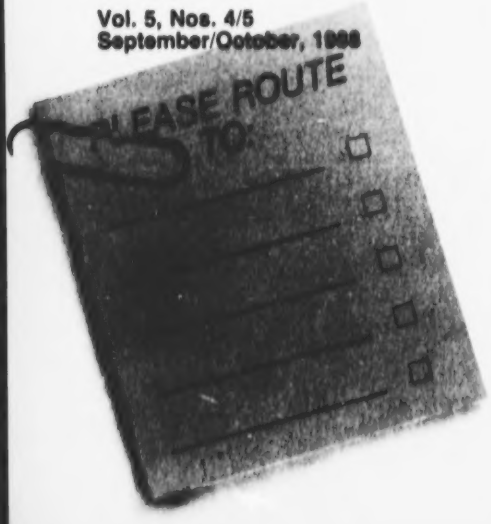

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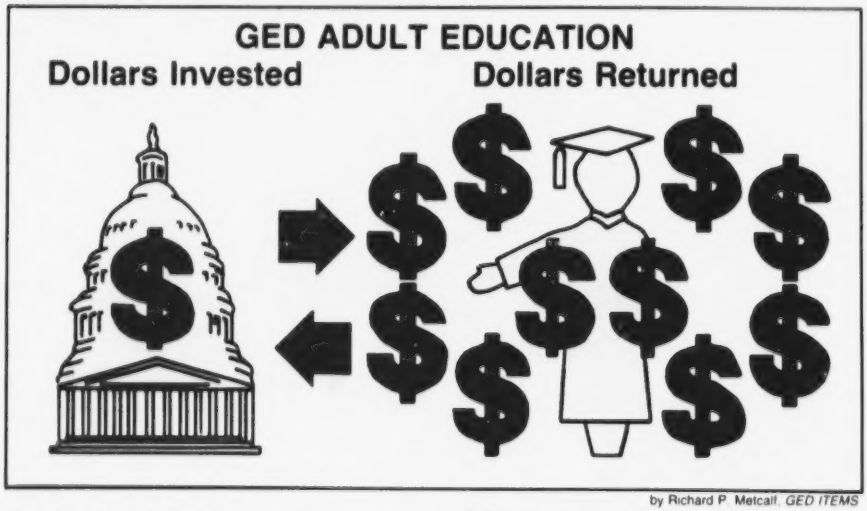
Follow-up of GED Completers:

An Analysis of Eight Studies in the U.S. and Canada

by Michele J. Sabino and Don F. Seaman



by Richard P. Metcalf, *GED ITEMS*

Evaluation of GED Programs

As the amount of funding for GED preparatory programs increases, some attempts have been made to determine the cost-effectiveness of these programs. Several states and one Canadian province have conducted evaluation studies which will be discussed later. However, among the few attempts to study GED programs from a *national* perspective, Cervero's (1983)* study is most notable. With assistance from the GED Testing Service, he randomly sampled 3,412 GED test candidates, from a total of 12,646, to determine if successful completion made any differences in their lives. Among his findings were: (1) the GED Tests tend to measure long-term outcomes in contrast to grades obtained in school; (2) most students enter into a GED preparatory program with relatively high expectations of "moving up" as a result of completing the test; (3) the majority of GED recipients meet their immediate expectations, i.e., a different or better job or enrolling in educational programs; and (4) about 25% of the candidates take the test for personal reasons apart from utilitarian ones. The practical uses of such information include revising program content and staff development practices, changing marketing strategies, and justifying requests for continued or increased funding.

Demographics

This article focuses on the following states which provided data for analysis: Arkansas, Florida, Illinois, Montana, Maryland, and Texas. Data from Washington was obtained by one of the researchers who conducted the study, and Doug Whitney of GEDTS provided an additional study conducted in Saskatchewan. Based upon the eight studies analyzed, the "typical" GED recipient is a white female in her late twenties who completed at least ten grades in school some time before beginning to prepare

(continued on page 6)

The 17th Annual GED Conference

"By this time next year, the new GED Tests will once again be just the GED Tests." With these words, Doug Whitney, Director of GEDTS, opened the annual GED conference. From August 8th through 12th, U.S. and Canadian GED Administrators, State Directors of Adult Education, and other guests met in Indianapolis to learn the first results of the 1988 GED Tests and discuss a host of related issues.

While citing problems along the way, Doug reminded the participants that with their considerable help and that of examiners, teachers, and examinees, "we have completely revised an international educational assessment system without shutting down the program to do so." Furthermore, "Today's GED Tests are *clearly* superior to any we have used in the forty-five year history of the program. They are fair, but demanding. The skills and knowledge needed to pass the tests are undeniably those that represent the major and lasting outcomes associated with a high school program of study—*today's* expectations and standards."

(continued on page 3)

Inside *Items:*

GED and the Military
GED 1988 Performance Results
A GED Celebrity Success Story
Ask the Experts
and more . . .

GED Success Story:

94-year-old Kansan Completes High School

At 4 feet 11 inches, she's little. At 94, she's, well, old. But that didn't stop the lady everybody knows as Tweety from graduating from high school.

Tess Twietmeyer, who dropped out of school in 1910, was honored with the rest of Greeley County High School's 1988 class after completing her General Educational Development course.

About 150 people attended a reception for her, celebrating under a banner that said, "Congratulations, Tweety." All four of her children and 12 of her 18 grandchildren traveled to Tribune in western Kansas for the event. President Reagan sent a telegram.

Twietmeyer said her daughter first suggested that she finish high school. Her instructor, Carol Coe, said she could quit any time if she didn't like it.

"So I thought, 'Well, I guess it's worth a try,'" Twietmeyer said.

Her course of study included reading, writing, social studies, science and math. She said she always liked math, but had doubts about the other subjects.

"I got excited about it and studied really hard," said Twietmeyer, whose husband died in 1948.

Twietmeyer, who dropped out of school at age 16, says, "I'm busy all the time. I do everything myself. I keep active, and I walk everywhere."

An interesting footnote to Tweety's story is that the computer that was to issue her diploma was programmed to recognize only birth dates in the 20th century. Tweety, who was born in 1893, was initially left off the list of GED graduates.

Adapted from an Associated Press story printed in *The Topeka Capitol-Journal*, and from *The Washington Times*.

Call for Teaching Tips

In light of the findings that examinees have more difficulty with the Math Test than with Tests 2, 3, and 4, we'd like to invite teachers to submit math teaching tips. Please keep them short and practical! Send to Susan Robinson, Editor, GED *Items*.

Reminder

March 12-18, 1989 is National Adult Education Week!

Options for the Future:

Where can students go after they leave the ESL classroom?

"Teacher, what should I take when I finish this class?" How simple this question sounds, yet how difficult it is for conscientious teachers of advanced level adult ESL classes to answer! Instructors who field queries daily about grammar, manners, morals and American cooking techniques often grow nervous at the prospect of advising their students about transitioning. They know there is no single, simple answer; each student needs and deserves different advice about where to go.

One place students can be encouraged to go after leaving the ESL classroom is to other adult education classes such as ABE and GED. While this option may seem appropriate only for students who haven't completed high school in their country and/or need an American high school diploma, GED classes can also be beneficial to students who already have a high school or college diploma. For these students, the GED class can be a vocabulary class, an American history and culture class, a test-taking class. Students often use the GED class as a self-evaluation of their readiness for non-ESL classes. As one student at the College of Lake County remarked, "I needed a review of my knowledge and this was it."

Excerpted from The Adult Educator, *the newsletter of the Northern (Illinois) Area Adult Education Service Center*.

BCEL is OK!

The Business Council for Effective Literacy (BCEL) publishes a newsletter noteworthy for its substance and content. Each issue contains notes on activities and programs addressing workplace literacy needs. The July 1988 issue, for example, included a thought-provoking essay on "dumbing down" job demands to increase efficiency. In addition, BCEL has lots of valuable publications designed to assist those who are working to improve workplace and workforce literacy. Contact BCEL at 1221 Avenue of the Americas-35th Floor, New York, NY 10020 (212) 512-2415.

GED Preparation Workshop: A First for Canada

by Lou-Anne Buhr

As GED Administrator for Manitoba, my mandate involves a relatively small but vibrant GED program that tests about 2,000 candidates annually at 50 test sites throughout the province. Still at the "grassroots stage," GED preparation is administered by colleges, adult learning centers, school divisions, correctional institutions, business organizations—some with government funding.

To meet the need to prepare for the 1988 GED Tests and because no one else was providing the service, we at GED Manitoba offered a Saturday workshop in June for the coordinators and writing teachers from the approximately 25 preparation sites throughout the province.

Our goals were to provide information about the GED program, offer staff development in the area of both general GED preparation and preparation for the essay, encourage a network of GED educators, and finally to improve the educators'communication with GED Manitoba and with GEDTS. We succeeded beyond our expectations: attendance was excellent, participation was enthusiastic, and feedback was positive.

The day was full. First we viewed and discussed the video *The New GED Tests: An Overview for 1988–1998*, produced by Contemporary Books with the American Council on Education. Then we investigated new policies and exchanged ideas about general and essay preparation, and dealing with test anxiety. We also actually wrote an essay, practiced the GED holistic scoring and brainstormed with a list of practice topics. At the end of a long hot Saturday, we finally adjourned but not before scheduling a follow-up workshop in the fall.

One of the four thank you letters we received (despite the fact that all participants filled in an evaluation form) read as follows: "Lou-Anne, may I congratulate you and your fine staff, John Einarson, Chief Reader, and Carol Mauthe, GED Clerk, for a worthwhile and long overdue GED Preparation Workshop. I left with a heightened awareness of what the GED is all about. I had no idea I was part of something so big—in every sense of the word...."

These are the kind of comments that made the efforts all worthwhile!

Photos by Joyce Downey and Richard P. Metcalf

Conference participants pictured above are, top row, left to right: Dorothy Oliver, New Hampshire; Clayton Blood, Maine; Fa'au'uga Achica, American Samoa; Ken Wallick, Pennsylvania; Fred Edwards, Connecticut; Harlan Stubbs, Kentucky; Glenn Gossett, Louisiana. Middle row, left to right: Bill Box, Mississippi; Roger Goldberg, DANTES; Gary Eyre, Arizona; Donna Harris, Indiana School for the Deaf; Turney Manzer, Nova Scotia; Lou-Anne Buhr, Manitoba. Bottom row, left to right: Cathy Erwin, Texas; Ken Walsh, Michigan; Bob Clausen, Oregon; Alvin Anderson, Georgia; Hartwell Lee Loy, Hawaii; Roz Petrilli, Illinois; Linda Gilkerson, Indiana; and Doug Whitney, GEDTS.

Conference *(from page 1)*

In addition to reflecting on GED accomplishments, Doug also explored our yet "unfinished agenda." Principal among those items that need addressing: a greater awareness of the testing needs of disabled adults. Though the number of persons taking a special edition of the GED Tests (audiocassette, large print, or Braille) has risen from about 500 in 1982 to 878 in 1987, there is obviously need for greater outreach. GED is attempting this through a section on testing disabled adults in the GED Examiners Manual (Section 7), through articles in the GED *Items* that address the range of disabilities, and through a more accurate accounting of examinees who take the GED under special conditions.

In all, the conference was spirited and enriching. This prevailing tone was set by both the nearly 200 participants and by the hospitality of our host state, Indiana. Next year's GED conference will be held in Albuquerque, New Mexico, July 19th–21st.

Highlights of the 1988 Conference:

- GEDTS announced the first results from the 1988 GED Tests. A report on the first six months of this year indicate that examinees are doing as well as high school seniors in the areas of Social Studies, Science, and Interpreting Literature and the Arts. As expected, the most difficult areas for our examinees are Writing and Mathematics.
- The Canadian administrators met for an entire day to discuss such issues as improving GED instruction, the 1988 Canadian Standarization Study, and the development of a new French version of the GED Tests. Completion of the French tests is expected in late 1991 or early 1992.
- A discussion of GED scores and standards was preceded by an illustrative skit performed by the GED Players. Combining rap music, visual aids, and audience participation, three wacky Valley Girls drove home key points on standard and raw scores, percentile ranks and normal curves. The skit was followed by a written quiz for the audience—the results of which are not available!
- Policy Development Workshops were held to discuss such issues as administering the GED Tests to in-school youth, awarding high school credit based on the GED Tests, testing persons with learning disabilities, labeling language, special editions and test acommodations on score reports and credentials, English proficiency testing in the Spanish and French GED programs, and a Candidate Bill of Rights. All recommendations were subsequently brought back to the GED Advisory Committee, which in turn will discuss each issue.
- Other helpful sessions included staff development for teachers and examiners and a discussion of instructional technology.
- An informative session by Donna Harris from the Indiana School for the Deaf left the audience with some sobering statistics: 95% of America's deaf students are prelingually deaf (that is, they are deaf before learning to speak); the average deaf high school graduate only reads at a 4th grade level; and deaf students need greater accessibility to the GED Tests, which few deaf students are able to pass.
- Ideas on marketing the GED were presented by John Rosica (marketing agent for Wally "Famous" Amos, Kentucky Educational Television, and the Learning Channel, among other friends of GED). Seven GED administrators then followed with strategies from their respective states. These ideas ranged from free testing, classes, and orientation videos to legislative awards luncheons, obtaining ABE/GED funding resources, and working with business and industry.

New Military Recruiting Priorities

The current Department of Defense policy for military recruiting involves three priority tiers based on the attrition rates of each group. GED graduates and others in the lower two tiers are enlisted if spaces are available. (See related article in *Items*, Vol. 4, No. 2.) Two significant changes in the military/recruiting priorities were made as of April 1, 1988: (1) one group of adult program graduates was moved to the highest priority tier; and (2) the number of college credits required for upgrading non-traditional graduates to tier one was increased.

The higher priority given to persons with "Adult Education Diplomas" did not result from better educational or military persistence records. The change came as a direct consequence of February letters sent by Senator John Glenn and Congressmen Les Aspin and Thomas G. Sawyer. Citing a pending study by the General Accounting Office, they asked the Department of Defense "...to group *attendance-based* adult education diploma holders with traditional day school graduates, as a measure of the applicant's tenacity."

But, the persistence records of the attendance-based diploma graduates are not as good as those for traditional graduates. Adult education diploma graduates leave the services during basic enlistment at about the same rates as do GED graduates and graduates of other non-traditional programs.

"Although we can empirically defend the placement of this credential in tier two, I believe it would be best to honor the congressional request," wrote a Department of Defense spokesperson in the memo implementing the changes. The adult diploma graduates' persistence rates will be carefully tracked until a larger sample is available. At that time, the policy change will be re-evaluated.

This change, which for the first time means that military recruiting policy is not based strictly on differences in persistence rates, makes it even more critical that the services accelerate their research on adaptability screening procedures for *all* applicants. (See *Items*, Vol. 2, No. 3.) An individualized adaptability screening system should replace the scheme based on educational credentials at the earliest possible moment. ACE is working to see that this happens.

Definitions of Educational Credentials

(from the U. S. Department of Defense)

Tier 1: High School Graduate

High School Diploma: A diploma issued to an individual who has attended and completed a 12-year or grade day program of classroom instruction; the diploma must be issued from the school where the individual completed all the program requirements.

Completed One Semester of College: The status of an individual who is a non-high school graduate or alternate high school credential holder, attended a college or university, and completed at least 15 semester or 22 quarter hours of college-level credit. Credit earned through testing, for pursuit of high school equivalency preparation, is not applicable. In addition, credit must be earned at a school accredited by one of the following agencies: New England Association of Schools and Colleges; Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools; North Central Association of Colleges and Schools; Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges; Southern Association of Colleges and Schools; and Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Adult Education Diploma: A secondary school diploma awarded on the basis of attending and completing an adult education or "external" diploma program, regardless of whether the diploma was issued by a state or by a secondary or postsecondary educational institution.

Tier 2: Alternative Credential Holder

Test-Based Equivalency Diploma: A diploma or certificate of general educational development (GED) or other test-based high school equivalency diploma. This includes state-wide testing programs such as the California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE), whereby examinees may earn a certificate of competency or proficiency. A state or locally issued secondary school diploma obtained solely on the basis of such equivalency testing is not to be considered a high school diploma. This is considered an alternate high school credential.

High School Certificate of Attendance: An attendance-based certificate or diploma. These are sometimes called certificates of competence or completion but are based on course completion rather than a test such as the GED or CHSPE. A state or locally issued secondary school diploma obtained solely on the basis of an attendance credential is not considered a high school diploma. This is considered an alternate high school credential.

Correspondence School Diploma: A secondary school diploma or certificate awarded upon completion of correspondence school coursework, regardless of whether the diploma was issued by a correspondence school, a state, or secondary or postsecondary educational institution. This is considered an alternate high school credential.

Occupational Program Certificate: A certificate or diploma awarded for attending a non-correspondence vocational, technical, or proprietary school for at least 6 months. An individual so designated must also have completed 11 years of regular day school. This is considered an alternate high school credential.

Home Study Diploma: A secondary school diploma or certificate, typically awarded by a state, based upon certification by a parent or guardian that an individual completed his/her secondary education at home. This is considered an alternate high school credential.

Tier 3: Non-High School Graduate

Status of an individual who is not currently attending high school and who is neither a high school graduate or an alternate high school credential holder.

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Teaching Tips

Overcoming a Fear of Writing

by Susan Slavicz, Instructor
Florida Junior College at Jacksonville

Most GED students must learn to overcome fear before writing the essay section of GED Test 1. Our first task as teachers then is to assure our students that *their* task is not impossible, that writing a clear, organized essay is not a magician's trick, but rather like learning to ride a bike—put each step together and soon the ride becomes automatic.

What do our students fear? They fear running out of time, not having anything to say about the topic, and, finally, the mechanics of writing. Each of these fears must be handled successfully if the student is to approach the essay with confidence.

First, to become comfortable with a time limit, each student must learn to time every writing assignment. Give one at-home assignment a week and insist that the paper be completed within forty-five minutes. Most students quickly learn that forty-five minutes is actually a great deal of time; in fact, many will have difficulty writing for thirty minutes and will not write two hundred words. Once the students become used to the time limit, they will be more relaxed about writing.

Next, students may find themselves running out of ideas. Since they know they should write about two hundred words, they begin repeating ideas or talking in circles. Here students need to be introduced to the concept of brainstorming—sorting their ideas into categories and organizing their thoughts *before* writing. Many students also spout generalities but need to be taught to use concrete facts and examples to support them.

Once the student's organizational abilities have improved, their attention can be centered on the actual content and mechanics of the paper. Stress the need for an introduction that states the main ideas about the subject, a paragraph for each separate point, and a conclusion of one or two sentences to draw the content together. By the time the students understand the structuring of the essay, they have usually been improving their mechanics. Above all, students must practice writing until they approach the GED essay like a bicycle—automatically and with confidence!

Adult Writing Skills:

Kingsborough's Approach to the GED Essay

by John Gilleece

The introduction of the essay question on the GED exam has made many people nervous—teachers and students alike. Responding to this concern, Dr. Gene Flanagan, Dean of Continuing Education at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, commissioned a structured writing program for the College's adult GED students. The strength of this program lies in its core of focused activities which enable adult students with little writing experience to create, organize, and write a thoughtful, structured response to the GED essay question (Part Two of the Writing Skills Test).

First, we created a sample GED essay question for diagnostic purposes. All students preparing for the exam must write an essay to answer the sample question. The essays are graded, based on the GED Essay Scoring Guide. In addition to the grade, each essay receives comments from the grader and a "prescription" for writing improvement.

The writing program consists of 10 units of work which separate the writing skills and add new skills layer by layer. The 10 units offer activity-centered exercises with simple, direct models and examples. Also, each unit incorporates graduated expectations for new adult writers. The adult students' "prescription" tells them which units require most of their attention.

The focus then is clear: give adult students the precise skills they need to formulate, organize, and write an answer to the GED essay question. Help them if they need it; get out of their way if they are already writing well. In short, teach them as adult students.

The 10 units are:

- Brainstorming: Students create lists of writing ideas on selected topics.
- Eliminating and Organizing: Exercises are used for eliminating ideas that do not fit a topic and for organizing and separating ideas and examples.
- The Outline: Students are asked to memorize a standard 4-paragraph outline. This unit utilizes memorization techniques to assist adult learners.
- Introduction Paragraph: This unit concentrates only on introductions—stating the topic clearly, telling the reason for writing, and starting-up exercises.
- Conclusion Paragraph: This unit is tied to Unit 4; only conclusions are written, including exercises in restating the topic, summarizing, and concluding.
- Body Paragraphs: This offers 10 methods of proving a point and includes practice in writing "proof sentences."
- Transitional Expressions: This unit provides lists and fill-in exercises to give adults experience with transition words.
- Organizing and Writing the Four-Paragraph Essay: This includes a full-scale walk-through of all the steps in writing a GED essay.
- Proofreading and Revising: A checklist and several samples are provided with which to practice these skills.
- Simulation: Representative essay questions are provided to prepare adults for the actual test; 45 minutes is allowed for the whole process.

Each unit has been constructed to be utilized in large-group instruction, individualized work in class, or for home assignments. The students' instructions take them through the activities alone and also allow the classroom teacher to interrupt, teach a short group lesson, ask for samples to be read by the class, or guide the class through the unit. These units allow the teacher a great deal of latitude in choosing his/her role in the adult learner's writing growth.

Over 970 GED graduates prepared with us at Kingsborough Community College this past year and were honored at a gala GED graduation on our campus. Their success reflects Kingsborough's determination to provide realistic, effective teaching for New York's adult GED students.

John Gilleece is a Writing Specialist at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn, New York.

GED Completers

(continued from page 1)

for the GED Tests. These data compare favorably with the "Selected Personal Characteristics" presented in Cervero's study except for age, where less than 50% of the participants were between 20 and 30 years of age. GED candidates are usually born in the state where they take the test except for Florida where less than 50% were born in the state and 11% were born outside the United States.

Program Expectations

Most of the studies included some form of the question, "Why did you participate in the ABE/GED program?" The general responses, in order of importance, were:

- Job-related (get a job, job promotion, etc.)
- Self-improvement
- Enter college
- Enter trade or technical school
- Enter military
- Other

These expectations correspond with those in Cervero's study which also indicated job-related expectations to be highest, followed by desires to be admitted to job training programs or other educational institutions.

General Findings

Most of the studies examined employment rates—the percentage employed before and after completing the GED Tests. The increase in employment ranged from a low of eight percent in one state to a high of a 26% positive change in another. And 36% percent of the participants in the Saskatchewan study indicated that the GED improved their job prospects "considerably" or "a great deal," although no specific figures on actual employment were given.

All studies included data about education and training in which the respondents enrolled after the GED Tests. The most common responses were vocational/technical training, college, and "other," which included personal development classes and courses in computers, business, and nursing. No less than eight percent in one study and as many as 46% of the participants in another were engaged in some kind of new training or education classes after the GED.

Five studies investigated how the GED certificate had helped the participants in their personal growth. The most common response was an increase of self-confidence and higher feelings of self-worth. Most respondents indicated they experienced an increase in general knowledge, job skills, social development, and civic usefulness. Better feelings about the family and the community were also recurrent themes as was an increased interest in current events. The majority said the GED preparatory program contributed to their desire for continued learning and all appreciated the "second chance" they had acquired for a better life.

The most important findings were those related to the "return from investment" in the GED program. Although only two states provided such data, they are significant. In Texas, the expenditures in the ABE/GED program for one year were $12,775,870 whereas the projected *increased income* from the GED completers, based upon data from the students themselves, was $70,410,515, *an almost "six-to-one" return for each one dollar invested.* In Maryland, the dollar return of expected income in "increased state taxes" paid by the 1981–82 GED graduates over their lifetime is projected as *$10 for each $1 invested in the adult education program.*

Conclusions

Based upon the findings of the eight studies reviewed, the following conclusions have been derived:

1. Adult education (ABE/GED programs) is very cost-effective, particularly in terms of "return on investment" and job-related factors.
2. Concern for cost-effectiveness is important but should not detract from the many other benefits to program participants. Most notable among the benefits:
   a. feelings of improved self-worth and dignity
   b. increased citizenship and community involvement
   c. increased general knowledge
   d. better attitudes toward family members
3. For many adults, completing the GED program provides the motivation to continue their education, particularly in technical schools and colleges.
4. Regardless of how the GED certificate is utilized, many U.S. citizens perceive it as a "second chance" to improve their lives and become more able to function in society.

Program Recommendations

From the summarized findings of eight follow-up studies in the United States and Canada, there is overwhelming evidence to support increases in federal and state funded ABE/GED programs. Although the data indicate a positive rate of return on funds expended for such programs, it is the investment in *people* which is important. In a democracy, human dignity and self-worth are basic for a free society to function. Yet, how can individuals function if they suffer from knowledge deficiencies at basic levels? Only proper government support and action can correct this for millions of North Americans.

Excerpted and reprinted with permission from Lifelong Learning, An Omnibus of Practice and Research, Vol. 11, No. 7, 1988. Lifelong Learning *is a publication of The American Association of Adult and Continuing Education, Washington, D.C.*

*Cervero, R.M. (1983). A national survey of GED test candidates: preparation, performance, and 18-month outcomes. *Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 7, 13-29.* (For a complete list of references cited in the original article, contact Linda Russell, GEDTS.)

[Michele J. Sabino is Education Coordinator, Houston Police Academy. Don F. Seaman is a Professor of Interdisciplinary Education, Texas A&M University.]

The Adult Literacy and Technology Newsletter is available from the Institute for Adult Literacy at Penn State University. It provides information on new and developing technology for literacy instruction and program development and includes articles, editorials, and computer software evaluations. The newsletter is useful to groups interested in introducing technology into their programs as well as to those who have already done so and wish to stay up-to-date. The price is $15 per year. Order from: Avis Meenan, Project Coordinator, Study of Adult Literacy and Technology Project, Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy, Penn State University, 248 Calder Way - Suite 307, University Park, PA 16801 (814) 863-3777. (*From* Urban Literacy Issues, *March 1988*).

News and Notes

In Wilkes-Barre,PA, Barbara-Ann O'Connor gained self-esteem and lost 85 pounds as a result of earning her GED diploma. The 31-year-old was the valedictorian of the 1986-87 class of the Luzerne, PA, Intermediate Unit 18's Adult Literacy graduating class, achieving 336 of 377 possible points on the GED Tests. Now there's a weight-loss idea worth marketing! (*From the Wilkes-Barre, PA,* Times-Leader.)

At Fort Bragg, NC, Patsy Stewart, Education Services Officer, reports that when examinees receive their GED diploma, it is in a leather presentation case. This emphasizes to the soldiers what a special accomplishment the GED is!

Kentucky's Parent and Child Education (PACE) is a successful new program that attempts to address the educational needs of parents as a means of affecting those of their children. Operating for two years, the PACE program enrolls parents without a high school diploma who attend school three days a week with their preschool-age children. While the children are in their own program, the parents study basic skills and parenting, then observe and work with their own children. During the first year, more than 70% of the parents in the program earned a high school equivalency (GED) diploma or raised their academic skills by two grade levels. PACE has a grant from the Kenan Charitable Trust to expand the program in the Southeast.

For more information, contact Sharon Darling, Kenan Family Literacy Project, 1063 Stark Building, 455 4th Avenue, Louisville, KY 40202, 502-584-1133.

In Minnesota, *The LD College Writers Project* has a list of learning-disabled publications available as reprints from their office. Contact: Terrence Collins, Director, The Learning Disabled College Writers Project, 106 Nicholson Hall, 216 Pillsbury Drive SE, Minneapolis, MN 55455 (612) 625-8384.

Nabisco, sponsor of *Bluffing It*, is making available a 13-minute presentation of *Bluffing It* free to businesses and groups requesting it. Send requests to Mel Grayson, Vice President of External Communications, Nabisco Brands, Inc., P.O. Box 1937, East Hanover, NJ 07936.

Ask the Experts...That's You!

More on Promoting Your Program

Last month we shared marketing ideas from several programs, but we ran out of room before we ran out of ideas. So here are some more...

Bob Clausen, state GED Administrator in Oregon, sent us a classy poster and accompanying brochure which proclaim, "It's never too late!" in bright rose and yellow. (It sounds odd, but it works! It looks more like a "real" ad than some public service ads, because it has so much pizzazz.) Bob sees that these materials are in *every* state employment office and many other state social service offices as well.

From Marcia Newman, editor of *Catalyst*, The Arizona adult ed newsletter, come more ways to get potential GED students in the door for the first time. Host an open house coupled with a high interest program and perhaps preceded by an article in your local newspaper which shows staff photographs ("so they can see how friendly your program is," she says). Or maybe start a "bring a friend" night. (The evidence suggests that most students are referred by friends.) You might even ask current students to design the artwork—posters, fliers—announcing your big recruiting event.

Ohio, Kentucky, and New Brunswick have all offered special *free* test sessions which they promoted through a variety of means. Richard Armanini found that although huge numbers turned up for the special testing, regular testing volume in Ohio was not reduced.

Getting out the word about the GED—what it is, how and where to take it, what the scores mean—continues to be a challenge. Because most of us do not have a background in marketing, GEDTS has hired a professional to develop a new marketing section for the *GED Examiner's Manual*, to be published this winter. It will be sent to all GED Testing Centers and will be available at a nominal cost to all adult ed programs.

For next month: Sharlen Krause of Yankton, South Dakota, would like to know what you are doing to serve emotionally disturbed adults. Please let us know.

Study of Examinee Performance on the 1988 GED Tests: A Follow-up

Adult Examinees versus Graduating High School Seniors

As reported in the September/October issue of GED *Items*, adult examinees in 1988 scored both higher and lower than adult examinees in 1980. Additional analyses from the 1988 GED Performance Study indicate that adult examinees also are scoring both higher and lower than graduating high school seniors, the norm group on which passing scores are based.

Because the GED Tests measure the major and lasting outcomes of a four-year high school program of study, credentials based on these tests are considered equivalent for most purposes to a high school diploma. Therefore, it is instructive to examine the performance of adults against the baseline of high school senior performance to determine in what areas adults need to improve.

On three of the five tests—Social Studies, Science, and Interpreting Literature and the Arts—the adult examinees achieved virtually the same level of performance as graduating high school seniors, correctly answering about two-thirds of the multiple-choice items on each of these tests. However, on two of the tests, Writing Skills and Mathematics, the performance of examinees was significantly lower than the performance of high school seniors. On Part I of the Writing Skills Test, seniors on the average correctly answered 73% of the multiple-choice items, while examinees correctly answered 67% of these items. Also, seniors on the average achieved an essay score of 6.6 while the average essay score for examinees was a significantly lower 5.6. On the Mathematics Test, seniors correctly answered an average of 70% of the items, while examinees correctly answered 58% of these items.

As these findings indicate, the greatest gaps in knowledge and skills for adults seeking to qualify for a diploma based on the new GED Tests are in the areas of writing and mathematics. Look for a series of more detailed reports on this study in subsequent issues of GED *Items*.

A complete report of the results from the Study of Performance on the 1988 GED Tests is being prepared for publication later in the year.

Journalist Named GED Spokesperson

About two years ago, The Kentucky Network, producers of "GED on TV," began to search for high school dropouts who had become successful after earning their GED. Since that time, four former dropouts have been identified and public service print ads and television spots have been produced encouraging other dropouts to get their certificates.

Once a high school dropout, Walter Anderson got his high school equivalency diploma (GED) while in the Marines, went on to college, and eventually became editor of *Parade* magazine.

KET's most recent spokesman, Walter Anderson, is a perfect example of a successful high school dropout. Obtaining his GED diploma allowed Anderson to attend college and ultimately go on to be an investigative reporter, editor and managing editor of several publications before becoming Editor of *Parade*, the largest circulation magazine in the world. In addition to Anderson's position as Editor, he also serves as Executive Vice President of Parade Publications, Inc.

In a new book entitled *The Greatest Risk of All* (Houghton Mifflin, September 1988), Walter Anderson describes how passing the GED exam, in the Marines, gave him the confidence to go further with his education. Anderson says, "It was in the Marines that I was able to develop my self-esteem and a sense of pride. After passing the GED exam, I was able to get into Marine Corps schools and grow with more confidence."

The Kentucky Educational Television series, "GED on TV" now airs on nearly 200 PBS stations and on The Learning Channel, a cable network carried in 14,000,000 homes. "GED on TV" allows those studying for the GED Tests to do so in the comfort and privacy of their own home. In general, television makes the GED preparation accessible to all.

"Walter Anderson joins the ranks of other successful former high school dropouts who are trying to inspire people to get their GED," said O. Leonard Press, Executive Director, Kentucky Educational Television. "The numbers of those who take the examination each year must grow at a faster rate than we are currently experiencing both for the good of the individuals who do not have a diploma and for the productivity of America. That's why we at KET have embarked on this campaign to help inspire people to step forward. Both the spots and the print ad focus on the generic GED certificate with a subtle push for the television element."

At an event on July 26, at WNET, Channel 13 in New York City, a ceremony was held to announce Walter Anderson's spokesman role for GED. At the ceremony, the TV spots and print ad were unveiled. Guests at the event included Dr. William Baker, President of Channel 13, GED students, and GED graduates to whom Mr. Anderson spoke on the secrets of his success.

The "GED on TV" series, and the ensuing public relations/marketing campaign that accompanies it, is reaching millions of Americans each week and is an advertising campaign that benefits *everyone* connected with GED preparation and testing.

Other former dropouts who are GED spokespersons are: Congressman Jim Florio of New Jersey, Warden Daniel Vasquez of San Quentin Prison, and Wally "Famous" Amos, GED on TV series spokesman.

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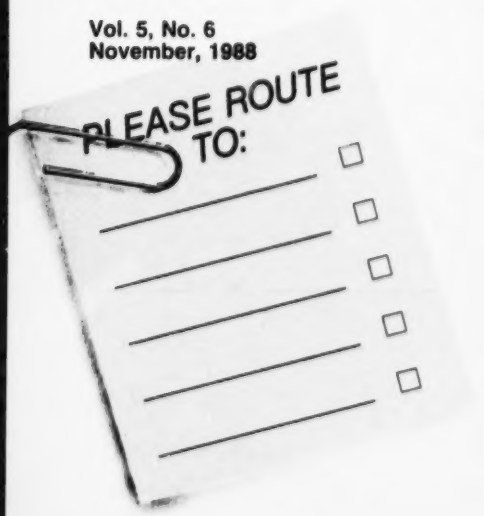

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